USER GUIDE FOR THE CEPOL ICU EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2026

Inspired by Erasmus

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidelines for participation in the CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme. It aims to assist exchangees, hosts, as well as the National Exchange Coordinators (NECs) and Single Point of Contacts (SPOC) in the context of exchanges. Participation in the CEPOL ICU Exchange programme is available for applicants of EU Member States[1], associate countries and partner countries of capacity building projects implemented by the CEPOL International Cooperation Unit (hereinafter ICU).

2. About CEPOL

CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, is tasked with organising training for law enforcement officials in the Member States of the European Union (EU). It began operating in 2001 and provided training for senior police officers and experts, and in 2016 expanded its mandate to all law enforcement officials of all ranks (EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council).

The aim of CEPOL is to support, develop, implement and coordinate training for law enforcement officials in particular in the areas of prevention of and fight against serious and organised crime, terrorism, public order including training in law enforcement leadership and language skills.

The Agency cooperates with a wide range of partners, including other European Union agencies such as EUAA, EIGE, EU Drugs Agency, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA and Frontex, other partners like EJTN and OLAF together with international organisations such as Interpol. CEPOL stipulates working arrangements with countries, in particular the candidate, potential candidate and neighbourhood partnership countries.

In reference to CEPOL's mandate (EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council, Article 2 (1) (a) (b)), law enforcement officials means staff of police, customs and other relevant services, as defined by individual Member States, that are responsible for, and staff of Union bodies that have tasks relating to, the following:

(a) the prevention of and fight against serious crime affecting two or more Member States, terrorism and forms of crime that affect a common interest covered by a Union policy; or

(b) crisis management and public order, in particular international policing of major events.

For further information, please visit the CEPOL website at: http://www.cepol.europa.eu

3. About the CEPOL Exchange Programme

The CEPOL Exchange Programme was originally set up in accordance with the Hague Programme (2004), followed by the Stockholm Programme[2] as adopted by the Member States in 2009. The

[1] In line with the preamble (25) (26) of the EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council, participation of Denmark in the Exchange Programme is not funded by CEPOL.

[2] As stipulated in the Stockholm Programme, Par. 1.2.6, p. C 115/7: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:115:0001:0038:en:PDF

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latter as well as the Council Conclusions on 26 April 2010 invited CEPOL to develop and conduct an Erasmus-style Exchange Programme for police officers.

The CEPOL Exchange Programme fulfils CEPOL's mission to contribute to European law enforcement cooperation through learning to the benefit of European citizens through the following objectives:

- apply knowledge relevant to the exchangee's field of expertise in a multicultural environment within the framework of a practice-related training programme;
- disseminate and share good practice at European level;
- contribute to the creation of a European law enforcement culture;
- obtain and promote mutual learning and networking.

The CEPOL Exchange Programme is a CEPOL flagship activity started already in 2007. The Erasmus-style method is a learning activity, which provides exchangees the opportunity to create a network of colleagues and familiarise themselves with the working methods of other countries by exchanging experiences and sharing expertise. On a longer term it contributes to build trust and to establish a more efficient cooperation amongst not only the EU Member States but all other involved countries, that fits well with the aspirations of the Preparedness Union Strategy and ProtectEU - the European Internal Security Strategy.

CEPOL is also responsible for the implementation of various EU funded projects – coordinated by the International Cooperation Unit (ICU) - that also integrate exchanges in their learning portfolio. Such CEPOL ICU projects implemented exchanges are regulated via this User Guide and includes the CT INFLOW (Counter-Terrorism Information Exchange and Criminal Justice Responses), EU4 Security Moldova, EUROMED Police and TOPCOP (Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime) projects in 2026.

The second phase of the CT INFLOW project aims to support partner countries in line with the EU political dialogues, to improve international cooperation and sharing of best practices on the exchange of information, criminal analysis, cross-border investigations and prosecutions, in particular about foreign terrorist fighters and individuals suspected of planning or carrying out terrorist offences.

For further information, please visit CT INFLOW | CEPOL (europa.eu)
The EU4Security Moldova project aims to improve law enforcement capabilities to deliver professional security services. It is built around four components: 1. Professional training system and digitalisation (The aim is to improve Moldova's law enforcement agencies by providing modern, comprehensive training); 2. Cyber lab (The goal is to provide the Moldovan Police General Inspectorate with the necessary infrastructure, tools, resources and expertise to establish an advanced cybercrime laboratory); 3. National Firearms Focal Point (It aims to enhance the National Firearms Focal Point's capabilities); 4. Strategic expertise (Support the Ministry of Internal Affairs in addressing specific actions based on EU regulations and recommendations highlighted in enlargement reports).

For further information, please visit EU4SEC Moldova | CEPOL (europa.eu)

The EUROMED Police VI project builds on the achievements of the previous edition to continue efforts to reduce organised crime across the EU Southern Neighbourhood. It seeks to strengthen strategic cooperation between law enforcement authorities in Southern Partner Countries, EU Member States and the relevant EU Agencies. Recognising the need for reinforced partnerships to

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effectively combat serious and organised crime, the project provides a structured and multidisciplinary framework for collaboration. By leveraging Europol's analytical expertise and CEPOL's evidence-based training approach, EUROMED Police VI further advances the EU's law enforcement cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood.

For further information, please visit EUROMED Police | CEPOL (europa.eu)

The TOPCOP project supports the fight against organised crime across the Eastern Partnership countries by enhancing law enforcement capacities. Building on the achievements of the first phase (2020-2024), the new cycle (2024-2028) continues to advance operational effectiveness and foster joint efforts to combat criminal threats. In this phase, CEPOL and Europol will advance their actions to further promote police cooperation and facilitate information exchange, enhancing the effectiveness of criminal investigations into organised crime.

For further information, please visit TOPCOP | CEPOL (europa.eu)

3.1. Coordination and Communication

The CEPOL Exchange Programme is coordinated by a team at CEPOL. A National Exchange Coordinator (NEC) or Single Point of Contact (SPOC) – in the context of ICU capacity building projects` partner countries - is appointed in each country. The NEC or SPOC is responsible for facilitating and coordinating the sending and hosting of exchangees, as well as contacts between the exchangees and the hosts. The NEC or SPOC also acts as the communication link with CEPOL.

All documents mentioned in this User Guide are subject to be reviewed and approved first by the NEC then by the CEPOL Exchange Team or respectively by the NEC or by the SPOC then by the CEPOL ICU Project Teams in the context of Project led exchanges. Documents sent individually or not via the hereby regulated route will not be accepted.

Note: it is participants responsibility to follow the national procedure for approval before the documents are submitted to NEC or SPOC.

3.2. Target Group

The CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme is a bilateral exchange of law enforcement officials, prosecutors, tax and customs officials, Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) officials and judiciary officials on topics related to the respective project.

All EU Member States and the Associated Countries[3] can nominate participants for the CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme.

With reference to the preamble (25) (26) of the EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council, Denmark as well as Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein can take part in the programme on their own cost.

In the capacity building projects the following partners can nominate participants for the ICU Exchange Programme:

In the CT INFLOW project, the European Neighbourhood South countries are included and can nominate participants: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and other countries defined according to emerging priorities and based on political engagements.

The EU4Security Moldova project includes solely the Republic of Moldova.

[3] Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

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In the framework of the EUROMED Police project, the following partners may nominate participants from the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine*, and Tunisia. In the TOPCOP project the Eastern Partnership countries are involved: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine.

4. Conditions for participation

CEPOL ICU does not determine a maximum number of applications per country however a fair distribution of nominations in line with budget availability will be ensured by the respective ICU Project Team during the matching process, giving priority to the specific objectives and identified crime priorities of the projects.

Beyond that, countries are encouraged to nominate pre-matched exchanges identified on the basis of above said priorities.

Participation in either the ICU Exchange Programme or the CEPOL General Exchange Programme within the preceding three years does not preclude candidates from applying to the other Programme.

Candidates can be nominated to the ICU Exchange Programme if they:

- have a reasonable level of English (at least level B2[4]) which enables them to communicate with CEPOL (submitting all the necessary documentation) and colleagues about enforcing the law on the selected topic;
- have a minimum of three (3) years of work experience and expertise in the defined specialised thematic area;
- have not participated in the ICU Exchange Programme during the last three years preceding the launch; have a need and readiness for individual learning;
- have the ability and willingness to cascade newly gained knowledge both on a European/International and on a national level.

Language

The main language is English, however, for an exchange it is possible to use other languages, including, but not limited to Arabic, French, Romanian, Russian Turkish, etc. languages. This is subject to agreement between the exchange partners, who both must have an adequate level of their chosen language in order for an effective exchange to take place. Therefore, it is important to indicate in the application form which languages the exchangee can use.

However, all documentation and the feedback must be completed and communicated to CEPOL in English.

5. Use of the eLearning platform, LEEd

CEPOL's eLearning platform, LEEd (Law Enforcement Education) is an online training system aimed at enhancing the online learning experience of users. Within this platform, the CEPOL Exchange Programme provides opportunity to the exchangees and their hosts to facilitate their communication with each other and the CEPOL ICU Project Team.

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

[4] European Language Pass: http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home

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The LEEd is available for EU MS and those countries with whom CEPOL has a working arrangement. ICU projects` partner countries will also be able to access the LEEd platform and access project-related materials (courses, webinars etc.) through the Multitenancy LEEd platform.

For the purposes of the implementation of the Exchange Programme a special platform is set up every year (Exchange Programme platform) on LEEd. Users can find there all the necessary templates and pre-assignment tasks of the Exchange Programme as well as useful information and instructions in relation to the different stages of the programme.

All feedbacks, narrative reports necessary for the completion of the programme are also done using the LEEd platform.

Registration on LEEd site is required to join the CEPOL Exchange Programme platform. For this the registration form has to be completed on https://leed.cepol.europa.eu (click "registration" on the top right corner). In case of ICU Exchange Programme, the respective projects' team member will approve the exchangees' registration and if necessary the exchangees will be provided with a separate document explaining `How to register` on CEPOL website in order to facilitate registration.

From 2023 CEPOL has been using the LEEd Exchange Plugin that allows the whole process (starting from the application) to be handled on one platform for EU Member States.

Those who wish to apply to the ICU Exchange Programme from an EU Member State will have to submit their application on the platform. Their application will be reviewed and approved/rejected on the platform, but approved applicants will be matched 'manually' by the ICU team with applicants from the partner countries of the ICU Exchange Programme. Approved participants will be informed via email and will have to submit their further documents along the process via email through their NECs/SPOCs.

Applications from partner countries for the ICU Exchange Programme must be submitted via email. (For further information on the process, please, see 6.6. Document and forms to submit in this guide.)

For further information on CEPOL's eLearning platform, LEEd, please visit CEPOL website: www.cepol.europa.eu.

6. The Exchange

6.1. Definitions

The terminology used here is "exchangee" and "host". The exchangee is the person who leaves to visit another country. The host is the person who receives the exchangee.

"Learning" implies the process of gaining new knowledge or insights either through studying but also through experiencing new things or being taught by others. This includes becoming aware of something by information or from observation.

"Cascading" of the knowledge means that exchangee shares with other colleagues the knowledge gained during the exchange, hence the period of cascading will follow after the exchange has taken place. The exchangees need to describe the activities they plan to do after implementing the programme, in order to share their newly gained knowledge with their colleagues in their home country and organisation.

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6.2. Bilateral basis

The principle of the Exchange Programme is that the exchange should be done on a bilateral basis. Each sending country also functions as a hosting country, i.e. each exchangee goes to one country and is also expected to host the colleague from the country s/he visited. Each exchange is organised around one specific topic.

Moreover, as not all countries have the same amount of exchangees and the topics may not be identical, it can happen that some hosts may receive more than one exchangee. Please note that the application form contains the possibility to indicate how many exchangees you can host, be it one at a time or as a group.

A unilateral exchange can take place to a country, who can participate in the programme at their own cost.

6.3 Thematic areas and sub-thematic areas in ICU Exchange Programme

CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme offers a wide range of thematic and sub-thematic areas according to the portfolios of CT INFLOW, EU4 Security Moldova, EUROMED Police and TOPCOP and projects.
Thematic areas of the projects are listed below, for sub-topics, please see the application form.

Counter-Terrorism Information Exchange and Criminal Justice Responses (CT INFLOW II)
Prevention and disruption of terrorist networks and the activities of recruiters to terrorism;
Cross-border investigations and prosecutions, in particular of foreign terrorist fighters and individuals suspected of planning or carrying out terrorist offences;
Criminal justice systems; Human rights and international law in regard of terrorism cases;
Regional and international cooperation to fight terrorism and exchange of terrorism-related information
Countering terrorism financing
CT measures in prisons and rehabilitation of terrorist offenders
Countering extremist propaganda and the use of strategic communications to prevent the appeal of violent extremism and terrorism
Nexus between terrorism and organised crime
Countering cyber terrorism
Protection of critical infrastructure and hybrid threats

EU4 Security Moldova
The most threatening criminal networks and individuals
▪ Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery
▪ Organised Property Crime
Fastest growing crimes in the online sphere
▪ Cyber-attacks
▪ Online Child Sexual Exploitation
▪ Online Fraud Schemes

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Drug trafficking
▪ Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin (CCH)
▪ Synthetic Drugs/New Psychoactive Substances
Migrant smuggling and trafficking in Human Beings
▪ Migrant smuggling
▪ Trafficking in Human Beings
Firearms and Explosives crimes
Economic and Financial crime
▪ VAT including MTIC fraud
▪ Excise and customs fraud
▪ Intellectual Property crime, Counterfeiting of goods and currencies
Environmental crime
Document Fraud
Fundamental Rights
Data protection
Management and Leadership in police

EUROMED Police
The most threatening criminal networks and individuals
▪ Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery
▪ Organised Property Crime
Fastest growing crimes in the online sphere
▪ Cyber-attacks
▪ Online Child Sexual Exploitation
▪ Online Fraud Schemes
Drug trafficking
▪ Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin (CCH)
▪ Synthetic Drugs/New Psychoactive Substances
Migrant smuggling and trafficking in Human Beings
▪ Migrant smuggling
▪ Trafficking in Human Beings
Firearms and Explosives crimes
Economic and Financial crime
▪ VAT including MTIC fraud
▪ Excise and customs fraud
▪ Intellectual Property crime, Counterfeiting of goods and currencies
Environmental crime
Document Fraud

Training and Operational Partnership against Organised Crime Project (TOPCOP)
The most threatening criminal networks and individuals
▪ Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery
▪ Organised Property Crime
Fastest growing crimes in the online sphere

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▪ Cyber-attacks
▪ Online Child Sexual Exploitation
▪ Online Fraud Schemes
Drug trafficking
▪ Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin (CCH)
▪ Synthetic Drugs/New Psychoactive Substances
Migrant smuggling and trafficking in Human Beings
▪ Migrant smuggling
▪ Trafficking in Human Beings
Firearms and Explosives crimes
Economic and Financial crime
▪ VAT including MTIC fraud
▪ Excise and customs fraud
▪ Intellectual Property crime, Counterfeiting of goods and currencies
Environmental crime
Document Fraud
Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)
War crime investigation
Hybrid threats
Strategic analysis
Fundamental rights

EU MS (or Associate Country) participant is matched with a counterpart from a third country (respective to the project) with same expertise, similar rank and background.

6.4 Main stages of the exchange

The main stages of the exchange consists of the following:

a) *Application process*
b) *Approval of application*
c) *Exchange request*
d) *Approval of exchange request*
e) *Submission of documents*
f) *Exchange implementation*
g) *Feedback and narrative report*
h) *Certificate of participation*
i) *Cascading activities*

A Call for Nomination is sent out by CEPOL to its partners, the National Exchange Coordinators (NECs), and the Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs) or Capacity Building Single Point of Contact (CAPASPOC) who then distribute the information to the national bodies.

EU Member States can only apply through the Exchange Plugin on LEEd until the deadline set in the Call for Nomination.

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Applications from project partner countries for the ICU Exchange Programme must be submitted on email via the respective SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC.

Only fully and completely filled in applications and forms will be accepted. Please note that in case of late submission of the documents, the ICU Project Teams reserve the right to reject the document(s) and/or request the exchange to be rescheduled to a later date.

6.5. ICU Exchange Programme

6.5.1 With access to main LEEd[5]

Without access to main LEEd and access only to the Multitenancy platforms (project partner countries), please, proceed to section 6.6.2.

a) Applications must be submitted on LEEd platform via the Exchange Plugin. Applicant must have a valid LEEd account in order to reach the Exchange Plugin. The registration has to be completed prior submitting the Exchange application.

   Supervisor consent is mandatory to submit – country specific requirements may apply, please enquire at your National Exchange Coordinator.

   Those who have previously agreed with a counterpart to host each other shall indicate this in the Pre-match section.

b) National Exchange Coordinator reviews applications (also in order to check whether the national application procedure has been followed) and ensures that the content is in accordance with the User Guide (including the supervisor consent) – then approve or reject them on individual basis. Applicants will receive a notification on the decision via LEEd, as well as to their registered e-mail address.

   In case of rejection, a note will be added as the reason for rejection.

c) Approved applications will be downloaded from the platform and will be matched manually with approved applicants from partner countries received via email in order to find hosting countries/counterparts fitting the requirements.

d) After the matching process, the ICU Project Team at CEPOL will inform the NEC about the selected exchangees and their counterparts about the outcome of the matching. The National Exchange Coordinator then makes sure, that selected exchangees receive the host's contact details so that they can explore if the matching is beneficial for them and start discussing the implementation details of their exchange programme.

e) Within 2 weeks after the dissemination of the matching outcome the selected participants are to contact their counterpart to discuss the details of their exchange programme, plan the exchange dates and prepare their activity plans.

f) 5 weeks after the confirmation of the successful selection, the National Exchange Coordinators must submit the selected participants' Travel Request Form and detailed Activity Plan of the selected exchangee, completed and signed OR must inform the ICU Project Team about any communication difficulty between the counterparts. Participants of the ICU Exchange Programme are also requested to add a copy of their passport and a valid VISA where necessary.

[5] EU Member States and Associate Countries

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Failure to submitting the documents on time could result in the postponement or cancellation of the exchange (in this case exchanges will be considered as step backs).

g) Minimum 4 weeks before the implementation, CEPOL arranges the travel according to the Travel Request Form. Travel tickets and accommodation vouchers will be sent to the participants by a travel agency contracted by CEPOL.

ICU Project Teams must be notified immediately of any changes or cancellation before travel by the participant and/or the National Exchange Coordinator.

NB: Changes or cancellation of the exchange after funds are committed (tickets and vouchers are purchased), might be subject to reimbursement/recovery procedure, unless due to serious illness (medical certificate is required) or other force majeure situation. More details in 7.1 Stepping back from the Programme.

The travel agency shall be contacted in case of a difficulty during travel (e.g. cancellation, change of flight, missed flight, hotel issues).

h) Within 3 weeks after the successful completion the exchange, participants are required to upload their Narrative Report to the LEEd platform and fill in the online feedback under the designated Exchange 'course' page to which they will automatically have access once their exchange request is approved.

NB: The Narrative Report is subject of approval of the National Exchange Coordinators and the ICU Project Team.

i) Upon completion of all the above, exchangees will be able to download their CEPOL Exchange Certificate that attests their participation in the Programme.

6.5.2 With access to LEEd multitenancy[6]

a) Applications must be submitted including a Europass CV to the respective SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC.

b) The SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC will then make sure that the content is in accordance with the User Guide and will send a list of candidates from the country together with the application forms to the CEPOL ICU Project Team within the deadline stipulated in the Call for Nominations. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

c) The ICU Project Team at CEPOL will then enter into a matching process in order to find hosting countries/counterparts fitting the requirements.

d) After the matching process is concluded, the ICU Project Team at CEPOL will inform the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC about the selected exchangees and their counterparts about the outcome of matching. The SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC then makes sure, that selected exchangees receive the host's contact details so that they can explore if the matching is beneficial for them and start discussing the implementation details of their exchange programme.

e) After being informed about the successful selection, exchangees must immediately register on the LEEd (ref. to section 5), unless this person already has a valid LEEd account.

[6] Partner countries in CT INFLOW, EU4 Security Moldova, EUROMED Police and TOPCOP projects.

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f) Within 2 weeks after the dissemination of the matching outcome the selected participants are to contact their counterpart to discuss the details of their exchange programme, plan the exchange dates and prepare their activity plans.

g) 5 weeks after the confirmation of the successful selection, the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC must submit the Travel Request Form and detailed Activity Plan of the selected exchangee, completed and signed OR must inform the ICU Project Teams about any communication difficulty between the counterparts.

Participants of the ICU Exchange Programme are also requested to add a copy of their passport and a valid VISA where necessary.

Failure to submitting the documents on time could result in the postponement or cancellation of the exchange (in this case exchanges will be considered as step backs).

h) Minimum 4 weeks before the implementation, CEPOL arranges the travel according to the Travel Request Form. Travel tickets and accommodation vouchers will be sent to the participants by a travel agency contracted by CEPOL.

ICU Project Team must be notified immediately of any changes or cancellation before travel by the participant and/or the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC.

NB: Changes or cancellation of the exchange after funds are committed (tickets and vouchers are purchased), might be subject to reimbursement/recovery procedure, unless due to serious illness (medical certificate is required) or other force majeure situation. More details in *7.1 Stepping back from the Programme*.

The travel agency shall be contacted in case of a difficulty during travel (e.g. cancellation, change of flight, missed flight, hotel issues).

j) Within 3 weeks after the successful completion the exchange, participants are required to upload their Narrative Report to the LEEd platform, and also send it via their SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC and fill in the online feedback under the designated Exchange 'course' page to which they will automatically have access once their exchange request is approved.

NB: The Narrative Report is subject of approval of the National Exchange Coordinators and the ICU Project Teams.

k) Upon completion of all the above, exchangees will be able to download their CEPOL Exchange Certificate that attests their participation in the Programme.

6.6 Documents and forms to submit

Process of the submission of the documents depends on whether applicant is from the EU MSs or ICU Project partner countries.

A. Application form

EU MS applicants: It is an online form to be filled in on LEEd platform, within the Exchange Plugin. Submitting an application including a Europass CV for the ICU Exchange Programme is accepted only via LEEd.

Supervisor consent *(FO EXPR 001-13b Supervisor consent for CEP)* is also a required document to be uploaded as part of the application. The requirements with regard to the Supervisor consent can vary based on country specific rules, and applicants have to make

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sure to comply with country specific requirements as well, those shall be consulted with the respective NEC prior to the application

Project partner countries applicants: Each capacity-building project has its own application form, provided as a Word document, which must be submitted via the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC, including a Europass CV. The application form contains the necessary information about the applicant whether they are technically and/or professionally eligible to participate in the programme.

B. Travel Request Form *(FO EXPR 003-13 Travel Request Form)*

It is a Word document, and it can be downloaded from LEEd within the designated Exchange 'course' page. It has to be submitted via the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC within 5 weeks after the approval of the exchange request.
It contains all technical details about the travel (personal data, exchange period, the date of departure and return travel, means of transportation, hotel proposals, etc.).

Hotel recommendations should be discussed with the host prior to filling in the form. While giving hotel options, priority should be given to hotels in a reasonable distance from the place of activities during the exchange, offering breakfast with a price under the hosting country's ceiling limit[7]. It is, however not guaranteed that the suggested hotels will be booked as the ICU Project Team has to consider the financial regulations regarding costs.

NB: in case the hotels listed on the Travel Request Form are not available or more expensive than other reasonable options, CEPOL is authorised to book an alternative, at least 3-star hotel in the vicinity of the proposed hotels.

Copy of valid passport and a valid visa are also to be sent via the SPOC/CAPASPOC/NEC.

C. Activity plan *(TE EXPR 003-13 Activity Plan)*

It is a Word document, and it can be downloaded from LEEd within the designated Exchange 'course' page. It has to be submitted via the NEC/SPOC/CAPASPOC at the same time as the Travel Request Form, within 5 weeks after the approval of the exchange request.

First part of this document contains the detailed agenda of activities during the exchange abroad (in the hosting country). This must be prepared in close cooperation with the host, identifying also learning expectations of the exchange. The activities also have to reflect on the pre-assigned questions/tasks provided by CEPOL to each exchangees, see point D.

Second part of this document shows activities after the exchange period, called cascading plan. Here the exchangee has to identify how s/he plans to share gained experiences of the Exchange Programme with colleagues in the home country's organisation. Sharing of experience can be through delivering a presentation, writing an article to a professional journal, e-learning, discussion forums, etc. Cascading of the knowledge can be done within your unit / academy, in national / international courses or conferences, on the internet, etc. If in doubt about how to identify cascading options, the NEC/SPOC/CAPASPOC can provide advice.

D. Narrative Report *(RP EXPR 001-12 Narrative Report)*

[7] As specified in Annex X– Hotel ceilings and daily subsistence allowances of the Tender Specifications CEPOL/PR/OP/2017/002 on Travel Arrangement Service

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It is a Word document, and it can be downloaded from LEEd within the designated Exchange 'course' page. It has to be submitted via the NEC within 3 weeks after the completion of the exchange period as an exchangee, and also uploaded under the designated Exchange 'course' page.

The Narrative Report gives detailed information on how individual exchangees experienced their stay in the hosting countries; which lessons they have learned and which best practices they have managed to exchange. It is not possible to step back from submitting a Narrative Report, but for operational reasons it is possible to request not publishing and/or sharing the report.

Non submission of the Narrative Report may result in CEPOL requesting to reimburse the exchange costs due to the failure to complete the exchange.

E. Feedback form

It is an online feedback to be filled in on LEEd platform, within the designated Exchange 'course' page, within 3 weeks after the implementation of the exchange period.

The Feedback gives a clear picture of whether and to which extent the objectives of the exchange have been achieved; furthermore, lessons to be learned from this information for future exchange programmes.

6.7 Further information

6.7.1 Preparation

6.7.1.1 Visa

Exchangees might require a visa to travel to the country of their selected counterpart. The following issues are to be considered:

The application and issuing procedure may take a considerable length of time. Exchangees have to ensure that any visa application has been submitted by them in line with the timeframe defined by the visa regulations valid in the country of residence/country of the application!

There might be costs involved with obtaining a visa which cannot be covered by CEPOL. The EU Member States in the context of ICU Exchange Programme is expected to cover the costs of any required visa for exchangees.

ICU covers the visa cost for non-EU partner countries.

It is recommended to take up contact with the relevant Embassy/Consulate as soon as the exchangee receives the information which country s/he will be going to, this has to be organised by the participant/sending authority.

For hosting countries, a model invitation letter is often required for a visa and it can be found under the document named *TE EXPR 008-2 Invitation Letter for Visa* for ICU exchanges. It will be needed to amended it to specific national requirements which must be clarified beforehand.

Timely application for a visa is responsibility of the sending country/exchangee. In case visa does not arrive on time before travelling due to a late application from the sending country CEPOL might recover any costs for bookings already made for the exchangee.

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6.7.1.2 Insurance

Neither CEPOL nor the hosting country takes any liability in case of any incident for which insurance is required. Also, the flight booking does not include any travel insurance.

Participants must be made aware that CEPOL is not responsible for participants' travel and health insurance. All participants are strongly recommended to ensure that they have personal insurance for any costs related to falling ill during the exchange, including coverage for hospitalisation and repatriation. For non-EU participants falling under ICU Exchange Programme CEPOL covers costs related to travel insurance (up to a maximum of 50 EUR) upon the presentation of relevant invoices. Participants from EU Member states are not entitled to reimbursement of insurance.

6.7.2 Exchange Period

The length of the exchange period covers 6 days / 5 nights, min. 5 working days, weekend not included. Deviation from this rule can be considered and approved by CEPOL Exchange Programme team in case operational reasons require so.

In order to ensure the working days are fully used, bookings will be made in such a way that the exchangee will be able to start with the exchange on Monday morning 9:00hrs; this involves travelling on Sunday. The return flight/train/bus/ferry will be arranged in such a way that the exchangee leaves the law enforcement premises not before Friday lunch time; this implies departure times no earlier than 14:00hrs. In some of the project partner countries working days are from Sunday to Thursday, which needs to be taken into account when planning the visit and adapted to these circumstances.

The CEPOL Exchange Programme must be finalised by 13 November 2026, which means all exchanges should be completed by this date.

7. Costs

CEPOL covers the following costs for the exchange:

International transport

CEPOL ICU will pay for the return transport (flight, international train, bus or ferry) from the main international airport/train station/bus station/ferry station that is situated closest to the place of duty to the main international airport/train station/bus station/ferry station that is situated closest to the place of the main activities in the hosting country, while respecting the principle of sound financial management. If the distance in the sending country is more than 300 km to the nearest international airport/train station/bus station/ferry station CEPOL will cover this domestic transportation if requested. Please note that the closest international airport can be in a different country.

Please note that private detour or extensions of stay for private reasons are not facilitated by CEPOL. In case of business detour, CEPOL will provide only one way ticket (only outbound or only inbound). However, in duly justified cases after assessing the reasons and comparing the prices, CEPOL may agree to deviate from this rule and book a return ticket.

Travel by car can also be one of the transportation options. This has to be requested when submitting the travel request form and it is subject of prior ICU Head of Unit.

The cost of travelling by car will be reimbursed at 0.28 €/km, to which toll fees and parking costs can be added after submitting the corresponding supporting documentation. The reimbursement shall be done based on the vehicle log sheet which has to be completed and signed. The maximum

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reimbursement for car travel shall not exceed €224 (800km round trip) to which toll fees and parking costs can be added.

Request for reimbursement has to be submitted to CEPOL using the appropriate Reimbursement forms for car travel (*FO EXPR 005-3 Individual Reimbursement Form Finance* and *FO EXPR 007-2 Participant Reimbursement Form for Car Travel*) and other relevant supporting documents, which will be checked by the CEPOL Exchange Programme Team/CEPOL ICU Project Team. The originals of the documents (including originals of toll fee payment) must be sent to CEPOL Headquarter by mail before CEPOL can initiate the reimbursement.

Reimbursement requests for car travel will only be processed within the year when the exchange took place. All documents, claims should therefore be submitted through the National Exchange Coordinator/Single Point of Contact within 4 weeks after the completion of the exchange.

Please note: Travel bookings are made based on the offers of the travel agency, taking into consideration the best available transport option, the agenda of the activity and CEPOL's financial guidelines. Please note that CEPOL is NOT required to consult with participants on possible travel options and CEPOL is authorised to book alternative flight/train/bus/ferry option in case the preferred option does not fulfil the above criteria.

Tickets sent electronically or by surface mail by the travel agency are already purchased, and in most cases, they are not refundable and not changeable. Participants are expected to notify directly and immediately the travel agency, the CEPOL Exchange Team or ICU Project Teams and their NEC/SPOC as soon as they are aware of any circumstances and issues that can affect their travel.

Changes or cancellation of the exchange after funds are committed (tickets and vouchers are purchased), might be subject to reimbursement/recovery procedure, unless due to serious illness (medical certificate is required) or other force majeure situation. More details in 7.1 Stepping back from the Programme.

Accommodation, including meals

Accommodation and breakfast are paid for in advance by CEPOL; beyond these costs any extra private consumption and charges in the hotel will be the responsibility of the exchangee. Should there be a matter of discussion, the service provider (travel agency) issuing the ticket/booking confirmation and/or CEPOL ICU Project Team must be contacted immediately.

Costs financed for ICU Project partner countries

In case of ICU Exchange Programme, the following costs will be covered for participants from project partner countries (non-EU Member States): return flight/bus/train, accommodation with breakfast and dinner, lunches, visa, travel insurance, taxi to and from the airport.

Participants from EU Member States will have the same costs covered as for the General Exchange Programme (return transport and accommodation with breakfast).

7.1 Stepping back from the Programme

Stepping back from the Exchange Programme must be avoided as far as possible as this not only has logistical and financial consequences but also has an impact on the counterpart.

If it becomes necessary to step back the CEPOL Exchange Team/ICU Project Team must be informed as early as possible via the NEC or in case of ICU projects via the SPOC. In case of a step-back, the sending/hosting country is welcome to nominate a suitable replacement that fulfils the

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requirements of the stepped back person, pending the approval of CEPOL Exchange Team/ICU Project Team. If this happens after CEPOL has committed funds and these cannot be retrieved, the exchangee may be requested to reimburse CEPOL for the costs incurred, unless stepping back is due to a serious illness (medical certificate is required) or other force majeure situation. If the sending country covers the cost for an approved replacement's travel, and the travel is still possible, CEPOL will not request recovery of committed funds.

Please note all replacement requests are subject to approval of the CEPOL Exchange Programme Team/ICU Project Team, prior to the agreement with the counterpart.

8. Incidents and complaints

A. During the exchange period: Any complaints, in the sense of expression of dissatisfaction related to CEPOL's services, during the exchange period can be taken to the CEPOL ICU Exchange Team, who shall take action where necessary and possible and find solutions immediately and during the exchange where possible.

B. Outside of the exchange period activity plan: In case of any incidents concerning security or health or other that happen outside of the daily planned activities, the National Exchange Coordinator or Single Point of Contact in the hosting country is to be informed. Here, the hotel staff or the Embassy of the exchangee's country may also be of use. CEPOL does not take any liability for such incidents but will provide support where possible.

C. At the end of the exchange period: For any criticism complaints related to CEPOL's services that cannot be shared immediately on the spot, there is the possibility to use the open questions in the feedback form to be completed on the LEEd at the end of the exchange (see 2.2). Participants may also submit their complaint in a written format to the functional email box under FM.EXPRO@cepol.europa.eu. CEPOL will review and respond to the submitted complaint in a timely manner.

D. Response: CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme Team will make sure that the cause for any complaint related to CEPOL's services is reviewed and removed where possible. If necessary, they will also ensure that changes are made in order to avoid repetition of the occurrence in future exchange programmes.

For any serious complaints submitted in writing, CEPOL shall review and respond within one month after the complaint has been lodged.

9. Privacy Statement

All personal data collected by the Agency are processed in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC.

A dedicated Privacy Statement for the CEPOL ICU Exchange Programme is available on the CEPOL website www.cepol.europa.eu.

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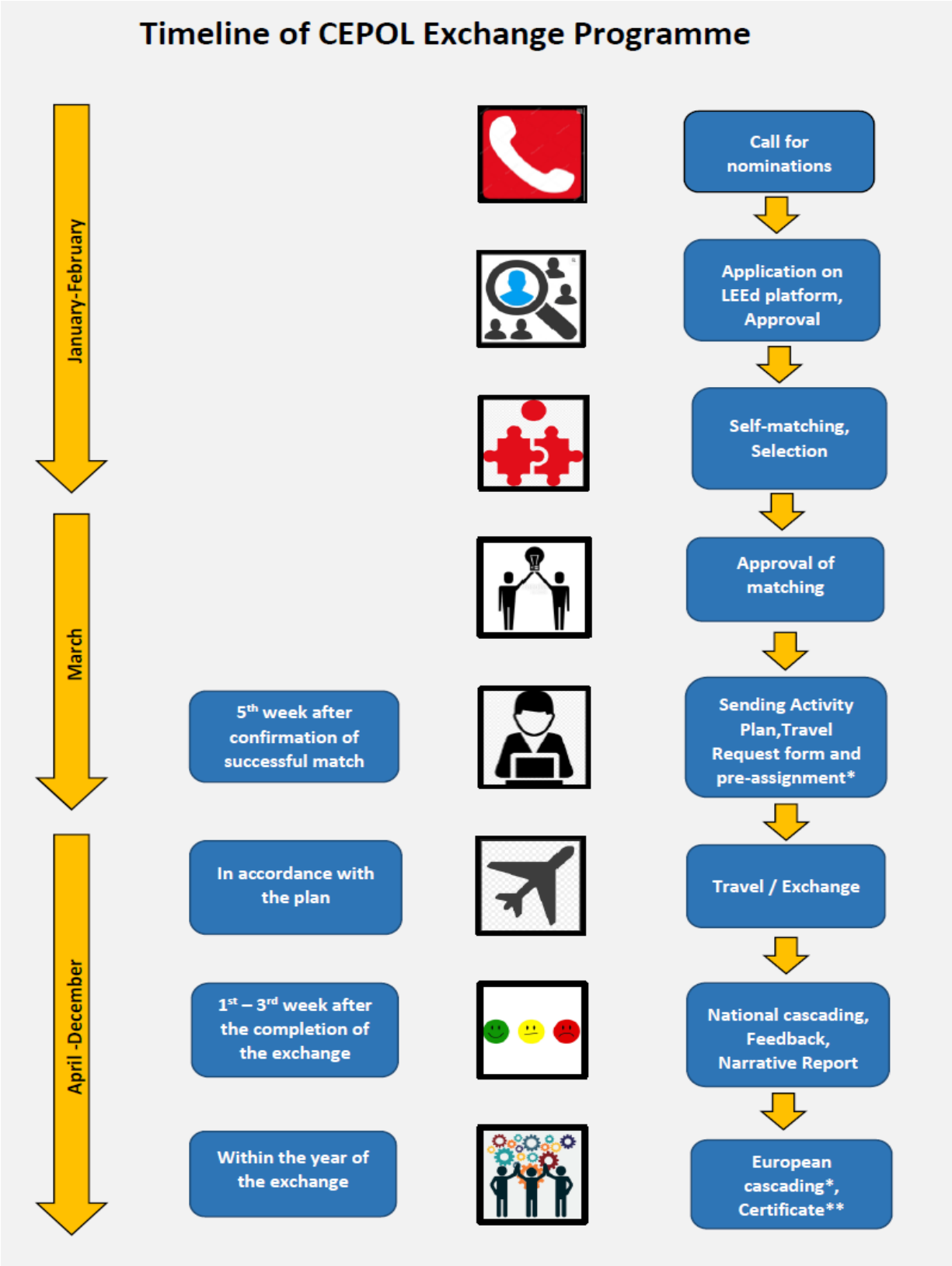
9. Timeline (in 2026)



* Pre-assignment and European cascading is not applicable ICU Exchange Programme participants.
** Certificate for CEPOL Exchange Programme participation can be downloaded after all requirements were fulfilled, including the European level cascading.

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