



*'The EU Policy Cycle is a framework which allows effective operational cooperation between Member States' law enforcement agencies and EU Agencies to address most pressing criminal threats facing the EU.'*

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship and Julian King, Commissioner for the Security Union (2017)

## Online Module: Executive Summary

The EU Policy Cycle for Organised and Serious International Crime – often shortened to 'EU Policy Cycle' – is a coordinated procedure involving the Member States' law enforcement and judicial authorities as well as EU institutions and agencies. It forms a joint approach to deliver a concerted common strategy and associated actions to combat organised and serious crime in the EU.

The EU Policy Cycle is a four-year process. The current cycle (2018-2021) is the second full cycle – it follows the two-year pilot (2012-2013) and the first full one (2014-2017).

The EU Policy Cycle consists of four steps:

1. Policy development: Europol develops the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) and its recommendations, based on criminal intelligence provided by the Member States;
2. Policy setting: Based on the SOCTA, EU-level crime priorities are developed, each with a four-year Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (MASP) and a number of strategic goals;
3. Implementation and monitoring: To achieve the strategic goals, annual Operational Action Plans (OAPs) are created, implemented and monitored;
4. Evaluation: Assessments of the results of the actions are made at the midpoint and end of the cycle.

The module aims to give readers a broad understanding of the EU Policy Cycle. Given the Policy Cycle's political importance and broad scope, it has the potential to impact upon the professional activities of many people within the EU law enforcement community and beyond. Accordingly, this module can be of interest to all EU law enforcement professionals. However, the main target audience for this module consists of individuals who are involved in:

- collecting and/or compiling data for the SOCTA;
- creating the Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs) and/or Operational Action Plans (OAPs);
- implementing operational actions within the OAPs;
- conducting cross-border operations, international cooperation, awareness and/or training at national level.

The module consists of an introduction, seven topic chapters and four supplementary sections. In the My Progress section, users can assess their levels of understanding of each of the topics by considering a selection of true/false statements.

The individual chapters and supplementary sections are:

1. **Introduction**
2. **EU Policy Cycle Framework:** This chapter provides a general context for the EU Policy Cycle, including a description of its theoretical background (intelligence-led policing) and its historical evolution. It concludes with an overview of the EU Policy Cycle's main features and development process, which are expounded in the following chapters.
3. **EU Policy Cycle Actors:** This chapter describes the roles of the wide spectrum of bodies and organisations that contribute to the production and implementation of the EU Policy Cycle. They range widely in both their level (national, EU, international) and function (political, law enforcement, specialist).
4. **SOCTA:** The Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) is the starting point of each EU Policy Cycle. This chapter discusses how this report and the methodology by which it is compiled have developed over time.
5. **Political Process:** This chapter describes how, based on the SOCTA, the EU crime priorities are identified and adopted by the Council. These priorities are summarised for the three EU Policy Cycles implemented so far: 2012-2013, 2014-2017 and 2018-2021.
6. **Strategic Plans:** This chapter covers the process by which the EU crime priorities are transformed into strategic plans, the Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs). It also includes examples of strategic goals from the 2014-2017 Policy Cycle.
7. **Operational Actions:** This chapter describes the implementation processes of the MASPs as Operational Action Plans (OAPs), and the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved.
8. **Management and Assessment:** This chapter covers how the EU Policy Cycle and its implementation are reported, monitored, assessed and evaluated.
9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
10. List of Abbreviations
11. Glossary of Terms
12. Key Documents