Online Module: Executive Summary

Europol is the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, its main goal is to achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all EU citizens.

Europol has a mission to support cooperation between law enforcement authorities in the EU in their fight against serious international crime and terrorism. To achieve this, it provides a unique and evolving set of operational products and services to support law enforcement authorities in all Member States. It also works with many EU institutions and agencies, non-EU partner states and international organisations.

Europol supports the law enforcement activities of the Member States by:

- facilitating the exchange of information and intelligence;
- providing operational analysis and support for operations in the Member States;
- providing expertise and technical support for investigations and operations carried out within the EU, under the supervision and legal responsibility of the Member States;
- generating strategic reports (such as threat assessments) and crime analyses on the basis of information supplied by the Member States or gathered from other sources.

This module aims to raise awareness about Europol and what it does and especially about the products and services, it provides to support law enforcement authorities in the Member States. It targets all law enforcement officials working in, or otherwise interested, in the area of international cooperation.

The module consists of an introduction, eight topic chapters and a glossary of Europol related terms and abbreviations. 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 are:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Governance and Management**: This chapter summarises the general mechanisms and responsibilities that underpin Europol’s governance, data protection responsibilities and its working relationships with its partners.
3. **Operational Support**: This chapter introduces the support and expertise that Europol provides to ongoing investigations and operations in the Member States. It also describes its main operations departments and provides a detailed description of the support it provides to joint investigation teams (JITs).

4. **Crime Domain Expertise and Support**: This extensive chapter covers the expert knowledge and tools provided by Europol to combat five prominent crime domains: counterfeiting and forgery, cybercrime, drugs, weapons and hazardous substances, and terrorism. It also covers two ‘horizontal’ areas of expertise and support, namely Operational Financial Intelligence and Special Tactics, which can be applied in many different crime domains.

5. **Support On-The-Spot**: Europol deploys analysts and specialists on-the-spot to support ongoing investigations and operations in the Member States. This chapter describes the various products and services, such as the deployment of the mobile office, which can be used by these Europol staff at a crime scene or other locations.

6. **Mechanisms (Additional Expertise)**: This chapter looks at the support provided by Europol at EU and international levels. This includes its contribution to the creation of the EU Policy Cycle and the implementation of the identified strategies through the EMPACT projects. It also covers Europol’s role in providing advice and developing relationships with non-EU countries.

7. **Information Exchange and Management**: This chapter covers Europol’s well-developed procedures for most efficient processing and storing information and intelligence, supported by several systems: SIENA, EIS, ERES and EPE.

8. **Strategic Analysis**: This chapter describes the wide range of reports provided by Europol to assist decision-makers to identify specific crime priorities and effective strategies. These include threat assessments like the SOCTA and TE-SAT, situational reports and intelligence notifications.

9. **Operation Analysis**: This chapter covers the support provided by Europol to ongoing investigations and operations and to give clear directions to the operational team. This support takes the form of a wide range of reports, including cross-match reports and operational reports, and takes place within the framework of an Analysis Project (AP).