

**USER GUIDE FOR
PARTICIPANTS OF THE CEPOL
EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**
Inspired by Erasmus

UG.EXPR.001-6

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidelines for participation in the CEPOL Exchange Programme (hereinafter CEP or Programme). It aims to assist exchangees, hosts, participants, as well as the National Exchange Coordinator (NEC) in the context of exchanges. Participation in the programme is available for applicants of EU Member States¹, and those non-EU MS the CEPOL Executive Director has decided to include in the Programme.

1.1 Objectives of the Exchange Programme

The Exchange Programme's objectives are the following:

- To promote mobility and allow the exchange of law enforcement officials, in the framework of practice-related training programmes;
- To establish a common and shared practical knowledge in different law enforcement fields;
- To disseminate and share, at the EU level, good policing practice;
- To contribute to the creation of a European law enforcement culture;
- To encourage mutual learning and networking in the framework of European law enforcement cooperation.

2. About CEPOL

CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training, is tasked with organising training for law enforcement officers 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 mandates 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 crime, terrorism, public order including law enforcement leadership and language skills.

More specifically elements of its tasks are to:

- Develop, implement and coordinate law enforcement training addressing specific criminal of policing thematic areas;
- Facilitate exchanges, study visits and secondments for law enforcement officials;
- Raise awareness on union bodies in particular Europol, Eurojust and Frontex;
- Train trainers and assist in improving exchanging best learning practice;
- Develop Common Curricula on specific subjects with a Union dimension;
- Through and electronic network to support web-based e-learning and other innovative and advanced training activities;
- Support Union missions and capacity building in third countries.

¹ In line with the preamble (25) (26) of the EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council) Denmark and UK are not taking part in the implementation of the exchange programme

The Agency cooperates with a wide range of partners, including other European agencies such as Europol, Frontex, OLAF, EMCDDA, FRA and International Organisations such as Interpol. CEPOL stipulates working arrangements with countries, in particular the Candidate, Potential Candidate and Neighbourhood Partnership countries.

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

3. About the CEPOL Exchange Programme

CEPOL Exchange Programme was originally set up in accordance with the Hague Programme (2004), followed by the Stockholm Programme² as adopted by the Member States in 2009. The 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 aim of the Programme was promote mutual trust between training staff and senior police officers, resulting in the support and development of a European dimension to the police cooperation and training. It provides the participants with the opportunity to create a network of colleagues and familiarise themselves with the working methods of other countries.

The Programme has been running since 2007 and is constantly developing. It currently offers exchanges for different categories of law enforcement staff, and study visits to EU agencies.

3.1 Coordination and Communication

The CEPOL Exchange Programme is coordinated by a project team at CEPOL. A National Exchange Coordinator (NEC) is appointed in each country. The NEC is responsible for facilitating and coordinating the sending and hosting of exchangees, as well as contacts between the exchangees and the hosts. The NEC also acts as the communication link with CEPOL.

All documents mentioned here are to be sent via the NEC to the CEPOL Exchange team. Documents sent individually or not via the NECs will not be accepted.

3.2 Target Group

The programme is a bilateral exchange of law enforcement officers consisting of leaders, trainers, researchers and participants within the frame of interagency cooperation of the EU and candidate countries, as well as European Neighbourhood Policy Countries. With reference to the preamble (25) (26) of the EU Regulation 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council Denmark and UK as well as associated countries can take part in the programme on their own cost.

The categories to choose from follow CEPOL priorities as determined by its Management Board in light of the Home Affairs policies of the EU.

4. Conditions for participation

CEPOL decided not to determine the maximum number of applications per country of the CEPOL Exchange Programme, however it is needed to be emphasised, that a fair distribution of

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>

nominations will be ensured by the CEPOL exchange team³, giving priority to 1) topics in line with the Policy Cycle OAPs, 2) national operational reasons. Beyond that, countries are encouraged to nominate pre-matched exchanges identified on the base of above said priorities.

Candidates can be nominated if they

- have a reasonable level of English (at least level B1⁴) which enables them to communicate with 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 category;
- have not participated in the Exchange Programme during the last three years;
- have a need and readiness for individual learning;
- have the ability and willingness to cascade newly gained knowledge both on a European and on a national level.

Language

The main language is English, however, for an exchange it is possible to use other languages, such as French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian as well as Scandinavian languages etc. This is subject to agreement between the exchange partners, who both must have an adequate level 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.

All documentation and the feedback must be completed in English.

5. Use of the Learning Management System

The CEPOL Learning Management System (LMS) is an Interactive internet tool created to assist all the exchangees / hosts in their communication with each other and the Exchange Programme Project Team. For the purposes of the implementation of the Exchange Programmes a special platform is set up every year (Exchange Programme Platform).

The Platform provides reports by the participants from the previous year(s) on specific exchange topics and good practices in the hosting countries; training materials from the EU agencies for law enforcement and Judicial Cooperation as well as e-lessons on specific topics. All surveys necessary for the implementation of the programme are also done using the LMS. Furthermore participants are given the chance to exchange their experience and ask questions via forums.

Registration on CEPOL's website is required to join the LMS. For this the registration form has to be completed on the CEPOL website: www.cepola.europa.eu (click "register / log in" on the top right corner). Your national e-Net manager will validate your account. NEC will also provide the participants with a separate document explaining "How to register" on CEPOL website in order to facilitate registration.

For more information on CEPOL e-NET and LMS please visit CEPOL website: www.cepola.europa.eu.

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe (COM(2010) 673 final of 22.11.2010)

⁴ European Language Pass: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home>

6. The Exchange

6.1 Definitions

The terminology used here are “exchangee” and “host”. The exchangee defines 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.

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 the same, it can happen that some hosts may receive more than one exchangee. Please note that the application form contains a possibility to indicate how many exchangees you can host, be it one at a time or as a group.

Unilateral exchange can take place to countries, which can participate in the programme on their own cost.

6.3 Segments and Categories

The Exchange Programme is divided into the following 4 segments:

- General Exchange Programme – for law enforcement Officers;
- The senior law enforcement leader section – for staff defined by the participating countries as senior Leaders e.g. Heads of Units / Departments or similar organisational sub-divisions at central / peripheral level and leading a certain number Officers⁵.
- The Exchange Programme for Trainers – for staff engaged as trainers in the national services;
- The Exchange Programme for Researchers – for researchers engaged in a project dealing with the specific issue;

Throughout all segments, participants can choose only such topic that aligns with CEPOL categories (as indicated in the application form). Any sub-category must range under those thematic areas and can be chosen in line with CEPOL’s programme of courses and webinars.

Priority will be given to exchanges in line with the content of the Operational Action Plans in execution of the EU Policy Cycle determined by the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) and endorsed and prioritised by the Council Standing Committee COSI, requesting Member States through the tools of EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats) to initiate actions and measure the outcomes of the Operational Action Plans.

⁵ Please note that this definition is by no means prescriptive

6.4 The different steps

The exchange consists of the following stages:

- 1) Nomination process
- 2) Selection process
- 3) Preparation
- 4) Exchange period
- 5) Cascading activities
- 6) Feedback and Narrative Report
- 7) Certificate of participation

1. Call for Nominations

A Call for Nominations will be sent out by CEPOL, together with this User Guide, to the National Exchange Coordinators (NECs) which will distribute the information to the national law enforcement bodies. A deadline will be given within which applications for participation in the specific segments must be received by CEPOL. Countries are encouraged to nominate pre-matched exchanges.

2. Selection Process

For the selection process the following steps are required:

- 1) Potential exchangees **must submit an** Application Form including a Europass CV (**FO EXPR 001-6 CEP Application Form**) **to the NEC.**
- 2) The NEC will then make sure that everything 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 exchange team within the deadline stipulated in the Call for Nominations. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.
- 3) The exchange team at CEPOL will then enter into a matching process (for those, who have no counterpart) in order to find hosting countries/counterparts fitting the requirements.-
- 4) After the matching process, the exchange team at CEPOL will inform the NEC about the selected participants and their counterparts. The NEC then makes sure, that selected participants receive the host's contact details so that they can discuss the details of their exchange programme, designate the exchange periods in both countries and prepare the activity plan.
- 5) After being informed about the successful selection, participants must register on the LMS which also can be used for communicating with the counterpart. Registration on the CEPOL website, which gives access to the LMS, must be confirmed before the exchange takes place.

3. Preparation

After having received the information about their participation in the exchange programme, participants will have two weeks to take up contact with each other for three purposes:

- 1) To check whether the matching has been adequate and counterparts will be able to meet your professional standard and learning needs;
- 2) To combine the dates of the exchanges as an exchangee and as a host;
- 3) To agree on the details for the exchange and the programme components.

For this it is useful to define expectations in advance and, preferably together with the line manager, the objectives of the stay abroad, in particular learning outcomes, specific topic and the

way of working in the hosting country. This can be relevant during the cooperation with the host when preparing **Activity Plan (TE EXPR 003-5 CEP Activity Plan)**.

An even distribution of exchanges during the whole year is essential for good organisation of the exchanges and hence for the success of the exchange programme; therefore it is possible that participant is asked to change the dates if it is planned in a particularly busy period. It is expected that all exchanges will be finished by 15 November.

As soon as possible, but at least three weeks before your exchange period the participant is asked to submit – through the NEC - the following documents:

- a) **Travel Request Form (FO EXPR 003-6 Travel Request Form)**. This document contains all technical details about the travel (personal data, exchange period, the date of the outbound and the inbound travel, means of transportation, hotel proposals, etc).

While giving hotel options, priority should be given to hotels in a reasonable distance from the place of work, offering a half board service with a price under the hosting country's ceiling limit. It is, however, not guaranteed that the suggested hotels will be booked as the exchange team has to consider the financial regulations regarding accommodation and meals.

- b) **Activity plan (TE EXPR 003-5 CEP Activity Plan)**. First part of this document contains the agenda of activities during the exchange abroad (in the hosting country). This has to be prepared in close cooperation with the host identifying also learning objectives. Second part of this document shows activities after the exchange period. Here exchangee has to identify how he/she plans to share gained experiences of the exchange programme with colleagues of the national law enforcement body. Sharing of experience can be through delivering a presentation, write 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

Above documents have to be sent via the National Exchange Coordinators to CEPOL Exchange Programme team. Only the full pack of these documents will be accepted in order to start the booking procedure at CEPOL.

Visa

Participants 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. Participants have to ensure that visa application has been submitted 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 sending country is expected to cover the costs of any required visa for exchangees.

It is recommended to take up contact with the relevant Embassy as soon as participant received the information which country he/she will be going to.

For hosting countries, a **model invitation letter** is often required for a visa can be found under the document named **TE EXPR 006-2 Invitation Letter for Visa**. It will need to be amended to specific national requirements which must be clarified beforehand.

The hosting countries are kindly invited to liaise, as early as possible after the identification of the participants, with the relevant visa issuing and border/immigration authorities (of the sending and hosting countries respectively) in order to facilitate visa issuance and entry arrangements for the visiting officers. Written communications to the relevant authorities highlighting the relevance of

swift visa processing to allow participation into the CEPOL Exchange Programme are highly recommended.

Timely application for a visa is responsibility of the sending country. In case visa does not arrive on time before travelling due to a late application from the sending country CEPOL will recover any costs for bookings already made from you. This is not valid if the reason for the delay is connected with political or other circumstances within the issuing country.

Insurance

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

4. 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 will be arranged in such a way that the exchangee leaves the police premises not before lunch time; this implies flight times no earlier than 15:00hrs.

CEPOL the Exchange Programme must be finalised by 15 November, which means all exchanges should be completed by this date.

5. Cascading of knowledge

Cascading of newly gained knowledge is one of the most important features of the Programme.

Cascading of the knowledge means that participant shares with other colleagues the knowledge gained during the exchange, hence, the period of cascading will follow after the exchange has taken place.

In order to fulfil the aims of the Exchange Programme, it is essential that participants share the new knowledge with other colleagues after the completion of the exchange period. Cascading is needed to be incorporated in the learning objectives.

6. Feedback and Narrative Report

After the implementation of the exchange period as an exchangee participant is requested to provide Feedback and to prepare a Narrative Report (**RP EXPR 001-5 Narrative Report for CEP**).

Feedback is given on the electronic survey based in the LMS. It gives a clear picture of whether and to which extent the objectives of the project have been achieved; furthermore, lessons can be learned from this information for future exchange programmes.

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. The aim of the Narrative Report is to make this information available for all participants in the Exchange Programme and to build up an e-learning environment for the future participants. Participants cannot step back from submitting a narrative report, but they can – for operational reasons - request not to publish/share their report.

7. Certificate of Participation

After completion of the Programme, participants who fulfilled all their obligations and submitted full documentation as well as provided feedback in the LMS will be awarded a certificate by CEPOL. Certificate can be downloaded from the LMS Platform.

7. Costs

CEPOL covers the following costs for the exchange:

➤ **International transport**

CEPOL will pay for the flight from the main international airport that is situated closest to the sending agency to the main international airport that is situated closest to the hosting agency 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 CEPOL will cover this transportation if requested. Please note, that the closest international airport can be in a different country.

Travel by international train and use of car can also be one of the transportation options. This has to be requested when submitting the travel request form ([FO EXPR 003-6 Travel Request Form for CEP](#)).

As CEPOL does not provide for lunches and domestic transport in the hosting country, it is expected that the sending country covers these expenses for its exchangees.

Following CEPOL approval of using service car, a km allowance and international toll can be reimbursed. Request for reimbursement has to be submitted to CEPOL using the appropriate template ([FO EXPR 005-2 CEP Individual Reimbursement Form](#)), which will be then checked by the CEPOL Exchange Programme Team.

Participants should be advised that CEPOL will not reimburse individuals by transferring money to private bank accounts. Reimbursement is only possible to law enforcement organisations which are registered in CEPOL's accounting system, ABAC. This means that if a vehicle from the national hosting agency is used, a check needs to be made beforehand if the agency is in the payment system.

➤ **Accommodation, including breakfast and dinner**

Accommodation, breakfast and dinner are paid for in advance by CEPOL; therefore participants should refuse any payments other than private consumptions. Should there be a matter of discussion, the service provider (travel agency) issuing the ticket/booking confirmation and/or CEPOL exchange team has to be contacted immediately.

Information for Dog Handlers

In case a service dog is involved, the dog handler has to make arrangements and cover the costs for this him/herself. CEPOL cannot cover any costs nor be held liable for any other requirements or incidents with regard to service dogs.

Participants have to be aware of the following issues:

- Countries have different requirements for bringing a dog into another country including evidence of vaccinations etc.
- Most hotels do not accept animals in the rooms. You will have to clarify whether the hosting organisation has facilities where your dog can stay overnight.
- Different airlines have different provisions for transporting of animals, either on board or in the luggage compartment. Also costs for transportation vary.

Dog handlers have to make sure that they obtain all the relevant information on time and check whether the hosting country is prepared to receive and support the participant with the dog.

7.1 Stepping back from the Programme

Stepping back from the exchange programme should be avoided as far as possible as this has consequences for the other exchange partner.

If it becomes necessary to step back the exchange team must be informed as early as possible via the NEC. If this happens after CEPOL has committed funds and these cannot be reimbursed the exchangee will be requested to compensate CEPOL for its costs unless due to serious illness or other force majeure situation.

In case of a step-back, the sending country is entitled to nominate a suitable replacement that fulfils the requirements of the step backed person. In such a case and if the sending country covers the cost for such the replacement's travel, CEPOL will not request reimbursement of committed funds.

8. Documents to be submitted

In order to ensure that all documents are submitted to the CEPOL Exchange Team please take note of them as listed below.

1. **Application form** (including Europass CV) (**FO EXPR 001-6 CEP Application_Form-2017**): this document is to be sent to the Exchange Team through the NEC in accordance with the deadline stipulated in the call for nominations. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.
2. **Activity plan** (**TE EXPR 003-5 CEP Activity Plan**): This document – together with the travel request - must be sent to the exchange team via the NEC no later than three weeks before the exchange period is due to begin.
3. **Travel Request Form** (**FO EXPR 003-6 Travel Request Form for CEP**): This document – together with the activity plan - must be sent to the exchange team via the NEC no later than three weeks before the exchange period is due to begin.
4. **Narrative Report** (**RP EXPR 001-5 Narrative Report for CEP**): The Narrative Report should be sent to the exchange team via the NEC no later than two weeks after completion of the exchange period as an exchangee. It will then be uploaded on the LMS by the exchange team. Participant may be asked to agree that the Narrative Report be fully or partly used for the publication made at the end of the year. CEPOL reserves the right to edit the reports before publication.
5. **Invitation letter for Visa** (**TE EXPR 006-2 Invitation Letter for Visa**): This template serves as a supporting document to those countries, where visa is required for the exchangee.
6. **Feedback form** is to be completed on the LMS. Feedback should be given by the Exchangee one week after completion of the exchange.

All personal data collected by the Agency are processed in accordance with the provisions of [Regulation \(EC\) N° 45/2001](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

Important!

All participants are obliged to sign a declaration which is a part of the **Travel Request Form** accepting the conditions for participation in the Programme. The Exchange partner respects the requirement that the support provided by CEPOL for travel and accommodation (half board) is not covered by any other grant or reimbursement from the EU budget or national budget.