

37th INTERPOL European Regional Conference

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Speech by Lithuanian Minister of the Interior Regimantas Ciupaila

Honourable Secretary General of INTERPOL,
Honourable Prime Minister,
Participants and guests of the conference,

The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior are deeply honoured to welcome you to Vilnius for the [37th INTERPOL European Regional Conference](#). Lithuania takes pride in having witnessed the very beginning of the International Criminal Police Commission (INTERPOL). Indirect historical data indicates that back in 1924 (other sources point to 1925) representatives of the Lithuanian Police took part in INTERPOL events. In the early years of Lithuanian independence our most active co-operation partners were the Latvian, German, Swedish, Czechoslovakian and Danish police, as well as Austria, home to the International Criminal Police Centre. Disrupted by the Occupation, Lithuania's membership in INTERPOL was renewed back in 1991, upon the restoration of Independence.

INTERPOL is the largest international police organisation and unites [186 countries](#) around the world in their concerted effort. The trust of international partners who have relied on us to organise this conference proves that the efforts of the Lithuanian Police and the Ministry of the Interior in the field of international co-operation are appreciated. In our daily work we are united by the common goal of protecting our society from criminal attempts both at home and worldwide. This is a vital prerequisite for the safety of people's lives as well as for the welfare and prosperity of the state and its citizens.

Recent analyses of the nature of crimes and activities of criminal syndicates reveal their increased proficiency. Today criminal organisations are well equipped with material, technical and IT means and enjoy extensive communication networks within the country and abroad. Moreover, the influence and role of transnational criminal organisations is on the increase.

Our task is to make sure that international relations and interaction between our law enforcement institutions are stronger than those of criminal networks. We need to consolidate our efforts. Thus we should make efficient use of all the opportunities of international assistance and co-operation that INTERPOL provides us with.

For 17 years Lithuania has been an active member of INTERPOL, participating in international operations, training, exchanging information with its counterparts, implementing joint programmes which have enabled us to respond to and prevent international crime, terrorism and other threats in a faster and more efficient way. For example, Lithuania was one of the first countries to begin automated transfers of data to INTERPOL's database on stolen and lost travel documents. This database has served as a useful



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tool helping our foreign colleagues to identify a large number of counterfeit Lithuanian passports and prevent illicit migration.

We were among the first countries to provide our police and state border guard services, Migration Department and other competent authorities with the possibility of direct online access to [INTERPOL's databases](#). Our current target is to ensure that the number of remote users of INTERPOL's databases is even higher. For example, the legislation allowing the Lithuanian Customs to access INTERPOL's databases is already in place. The Financial Crime Investigation Service will also start using the databases shortly. At the moment, legal and technical evaluation is under way in order to enable electronic transfer of [DNA profiles](#) collected in the database of the Lithuanian Police Criminal Investigation Centre to the DNA database of INTERPOL.

There are numerous examples of successful co-operation which point to the efficient use Lithuania makes of INTERPOL's databases – for instance, in 2006 we detained a national of Costa Rica wanted for trafficking in children and their organs. He requested the Migration Department for a residence permit, however, after having checked his identity in INTERPOL's databases of wanted persons we found out that he was on the list. As a consequence, he was arrested and extradited to Costa Rica to be given a prison sentence of 30 to 40 years.

In 2007 the team of INTERPOL experts evaluated the performance of the Lithuanian National Central Bureau and named the Lithuanian NCB and the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau as a role model to other countries.

It is noteworthy that the Lithuanian Police is now undergoing important changes. Last year saw the launch of the Programme for the development of the Lithuanian Police system approved by the Lithuanian Parliament. The programme is aimed at building an efficient and rational police system. It also includes the modernisation of the material and technical basis of police establishments, development of police information systems and granting additional funds to strengthen police capacity in detecting and investigating crimes related to organised crime and terrorism as well as cybercrime. All of these measures will, without doubt, help the Lithuanian police to become an ever better and more reliable partner to other countries' police services in their fight against organised crime.

Distinguished participants of the conference, I am confident that the subsequent implementation of constructive ideas generated in this conference will consolidate INTERPOL's and our countries' ability to contain international crime and will help us achieve our goals. I wish everyone creative and fruitful work and many enjoyable moments.

Thank you for your attention.