



## **Speech**

by

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**46th INTERPOL European Regional Conference**

**16 May 2018  
Dublin, Ireland**

Honourable Minister for Justice and Equality for Ireland, Charles Flanagan;  
INTERPOL Secretary General, Jürgen Stock;  
Members of the Executive Committee;  
Distinguished Chiefs of Police;  
Heads of Delegations and NCBS;  
Representatives from INTERPOL Partner Institutions;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning,

I am very pleased to speak on behalf of the organization at the European Regional Conference. First of all, I would like to thank the Irish government and the An Garda Síochána for their excellent and thoughtful organization of this meeting. I would also like to thank the General Secretariat and colleagues from the European region for their wonderful preparation. This regional meeting will be very pragmatic and effective.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the role and function of Europe in INTERPOL, especially in the context of building a future-oriented international police organization. What will be the role and function of European police? During the European Regional Conference last year, I mentioned that Europe was the generator of INTERPOL. This organization was founded in Europe. For a long time INTERPOL was essentially an European police organization.

Today, INTERPOL is a global organization. European police have played a central and driving role in our organization. In our databases, 56 of the 86 million records are provided by the European region, which accounts for more than half of our records. In the last year, there were 4.5 billion searches of our databases, of which 2.4 billion were from the European region. More than one-third of the seconded officers in INTERPOL are from the European region and 44 per cent of the organizational budget are contributed by the European countries.

All of the above are clear indications of the importance of Europe in INTERPOL. More importantly, the European region has developed advanced policing concepts and model. It is the main origin of strategic thinking on policing development, leading the trend of global policing. These are all the significant contributions made by police in Europe and it has already extended to global security.

I would like to highlight the following: In the context of drastic changes in our world and times, what future role will police in Europe play in INTERPOL? What are their new functions? These are the questions the European region needs to think about. We must understand that global crime has undergone a significant change. There are actually two main points: First, it is obvious that globalization, virtualization and high-tech are the new features of crime.

Second: Crime has become a global security issue. This was not the case in the past. Not only at the G7, G20 and UN, challenges arising from crime are now on the agenda of big countries for discussion. It is put on the agenda for heads of state because of its pressing and crucial nature. This is something we did not have in the past and something we have to understand.

On the other hand, as members of the European region, note should be taken of the changes taking place in our organization. With its 192 members, INTERPOL is a global organization and the only inter-governmental police cooperation organization in the world. This change is also a strategic one and we must look at the responsibility of police in Europe in this area. What are their obligations? The responsibilities and obligations of our organization are global as it faces the security interests of all mankind. Therefore, police in Europe need to have broader view. We need to look at, analyze and solve problems from a global perspective. It is particularly vital for us to possess strategic vision and foresight. To achieve the above, what we need to do?

First of all, we should remain innovative. Police in Europe have been leading the trend in global policing. It is important for the European region to maintain its innovative spirit in order to face the future and adapt to the new era. We have to continue pursuing advances in policing, including ideology, models, and concepts.

Secondly, I hope Europe can contribute towards the balancing of global policing capabilities. This point is self-evident, because from the global policing perspective, the European region is the strongest. We have the responsibility to assist other countries and regions to enhance their capabilities as soon as possible. This is a strategic rather than a moral issue. It is a problem that must be addressed so as to tackle the global crime problems. I always underlined that 'helping others is equal to helping oneself'.

For the third point, I would also like to bring to your attention that during the time of drastic global changes, the global governance structure is also entering a period of change. The impact of political factors is also a challenge for our organization.

Under such circumstances, I hope that we will adhere to our neutral and apolitical position on major issues. Neutral and apolitical, to put it another way, is to reflect objectivity and fairness. All major issues should be decided on their merits, not by political factors. I think this is a very serious issue faced by our organization.

There is an old saying in China that our ancestor Mencius expressed: "A just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust cause finds little." This old saying highlights the importance of fairness and justice: Whoever presides over fairness and justice will gain support from the majority of people. Do not, however, preside over injustice, as even your relatives and your family will oppose you. Preside over justice to the extreme and the whole world will support you. I think it is reflected in our organization's tradition and history, our charter, and our principles. I hope that in this regard, the European region can play a leading role.

To conclude, our mission now is to build a future-oriented INTERPOL. In this respect, I have high expectation of the European region. I hope you will continue your role as the generator for the growth of the organization, lead advancements in policing and contribute your strength to make INTERPOL become a more powerful organization as we face the future.

Thank you.