

**EU JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTERS
INFORMAL MEETING
(GÖRÖLLŐ, HUNGARY, 20 JANUARY 2011)**

REMARKS

BY

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INTERPOL SECRETARY GENERAL**

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. Let me first offer my deepest thanks to our hosts for their invitation to participate in this meeting. It is a great opportunity for INTERPOL, and it would not have been possible without their support.

Hungary has been unwavering in its commitment to INTERPOL. I am so pleased to be back in this beautiful country, where my first INTERPOL General Assembly as Secretary General was held in 2001.

At the time of that General Assembly in Budapest – just days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States – I said stronger cooperation with Europol would be a top priority in the face of the changing security landscape.

And 10 years later, I can say proudly our relations with Europol, with Europe, have never been better. We have a robust partnership where the lines of information, expertise and resources flow both ways.

Europol's Director, my friend Rob Wainwright, is here and I am confident he would agree. In crime areas as diverse as maritime piracy, human trafficking and counterfeiting, our two organizations have found common cause and shared purpose.

One of the main priorities of the Stockholm Programme is protecting your citizens from organized crime and terrorism through improved cooperation and integrated border management.

I am heartened that INTERPOL was highlighted as a valuable partner in this endeavor, because I strongly believe that neither INTERPOL nor the European Union can thrive without the other.

Not when the regions of the world are more interconnected than ever before. A crime originating in one area can destabilize all others in its wake, as we are seeing with the increasing amount of cocaine from South America making its way to Europe's streets through West Africa.

And not when crimes are more interconnected. Organized crime fosters more violence and corruption. Trafficking routes can be used to commit a host of other cross-border crimes. Zones of instability become attractive safe havens and bases of operation for organized criminals and terrorists.

An EU Council Decision passed last month called for information on suspected maritime pirates collected by members of the EU's Operation Atalanta, such as fingerprints, nominal data and identity documents, to be provided to INTERPOL for checking against our global databases, to facilitate the identification, location and prosecution of suspects.

Fighting all forms of organized crime – whether on land or the high seas – requires a comprehensive approach that gathers intelligence and resources and maximizes strategic partnerships.

A key pillar of this is the effective management of borders, an area where I believe INTERPOL has the unique capacity to supplement your efforts at the EU level.

Transnational organized criminals require mobility above all else, and they are most vulnerable at borders.

INTERPOL maintains the only global repository of stolen and lost travel documents. It currently contains over 24 million records submitted by more than 150 countries.

We have developed the technical solutions to expand access to this and other INTERPOL databases to officers at airports and border checkpoints. To date, 12 EU countries have implemented these solutions.

Last year, our 188 member countries searched this database almost **half a billion** times, recording more than 42,000 positive matches between documents presented by travellers and ones reported as stolen or lost by our member countries. Of those, EU members accounted for 24,000 positive matches, each one a threat or potential threat to your communities.

The EU has generously funded the expansion of these vital tools to front-line officers throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Americas, recognizing that threats may originate far beyond your shores.

When I met with the High Commissioner of Hungary's National Police, Mr. Jozsef Hatala, last month, we also discussed expansion to this country's international airports and border crossings.

These initiatives will go a long way towards disrupting the types of criminal activity that feed on porous borders, like human and drug trafficking.

Now, what if, in the coming years, as a consequence of the tighter security of our physical borders more criminals target our virtual borders? Will we be sufficiently prepared?

A cyber attack can be launched from anywhere in the world but the risk to your citizens and your economies at home is very real.

Worldwide, 75 percent of all Internet users report having been victims of online crime at least once. If you can imagine, I recently discovered that there were two fake profiles of me on Facebook asking for tips from the public.

Beyond acts of cyber-crime as they are traditionally defined, many forms of criminality now have a technical component, for example, terrorism, with radicalization largely taking place on the Internet.

London's Metropolitan Police Commissioner recently said, "The modern crime lord will have a cyber expert on hand."¹

INTERPOL expects to be able to devise cutting-edge solutions to some of the toughest cyber-crime challenges through the Global Complex we are currently developing in Singapore.

Shortages of resources and expertise plague even the most advanced nations. But with this complex, we hope to build much-needed capacity in this field to the benefit of our member countries in all regions.

No doubt, the criminals will likely always be better funded and better equipped, but we can be smarter in our approaches and more coordinated in our responses.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I know many of your countries are struggling financially right now, as are many parts of the world. INTERPOL has also been hurt by the economic downturn. We are confronting a future of growing demands on our services and fewer resources to fulfill them.

But austerity also provides opportunity. It forces us to be more creative and more innovative to avoid the duplication of effort and waste of precious resources.

Last summer, INTERPOL coordinated a worldwide operation that brought together 29 different countries, including many from the EU, called Infra-Red. At its essence, it was the simplest but most effective demonstration of international police cooperation.

Among the fugitives captured during the operation included two wanted by the US for child sex offenses who were arrested in the United Kingdom and Poland; one sought by Austria for kidnapping and assault arrested in Thailand; and one wanted by France for counterfeiting and money laundering arrested in South Africa.

All told, more than 160 fugitives were arrested or located.

The operation was a great example of how you support and strengthen the work of INTERPOL and how we, in turn, link Europe with the rest of the world.

I look forward to working more closely with all of you and with Europol, Frontex, Eurojust and other EU bodies towards achieving our common objectives. Your citizens, our member countries, deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your attention.