

Madam President,
Mr Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As a member of the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files and in the absence of Ms Vajić, the Chairperson of the CCF, it is my honour to present to you the 2014 Annual Activity Report of the CCF.
2. Before I go in depth into the presentation, I would like us to think in practical terms what is the essential function of the CCF.
3. If we believe that the quality of data needed for international cooperation is to be ensured at all costs, then we should also agree that the CCF is an oversight body which is essentially required to monitor the processing of quality data.
4. There are many ways in which we can ensure that the CCF becomes more legally structured and more empowered to perform its functions in a more effective way; there is always room for improvement and I believe in innovation.
5. But what is important is that we do not forget that this body is here to protect fundamental human rights in a police environment. And we have lived up to this expectation up to now.
6. To begin with, I wish to remind you of the three main tasks carried out by CCF; processing of individual requests, provision of advice to INTERPOL, along with monitoring and conducting spot checks. These three roles at times can be quite varied, however they have proven to be complimentary in providing CCF with a clearer picture of the functioning of INTERPOL.
7. CCF carries out these roles with utmost seriousness and attention to details. It remains constantly aware of the importance of its work and recommendations, in ensuring that individual's rights are upheld and protecting INTERPOL from potential risks to its reputation, while vigilantly reminding that all work involving the processing of personal data conducted by INTERPOL should be in line with its own established rules. CCF understands that the balance between these issues is a delicate one to maintain and it endeavours to always find the appropriate balance in each of its three roles.
8. I would also like to highlight the fact that CCF continues to face an ever increasing workload. Not only do the number of individual requests received continue to increase exponentially, but there has also been a rise in the number of challenges and appeals of decisions taken by CCF, received from both NCBs and requesting parties. This increased dynamic could be seen as a result of the development and growth of INTERPOL as a whole. These challenges include heightened scrutiny of the treatment of individual requests, from requesting parties, lawyers and media. I will discuss this in further detail later on in the presentation.

9. CCF has always sought in the past to remind the General Secretariat of its own responsibilities to ensure the compliance of any information recorded in its files, with its own rules. CCF considers that its role, along with the advice and feedback it provides, should never prevent or discourage the General Secretariat from conducting its own compliance checks and ensuring that it has the appropriate procedures in place for an effective processing of personal data.
10. It is in light of this position previously expressed and emphasized by CCF that we now warmly welcome a number of developments, which have been introduced by the General Secretariat over the last year.
11. The first of these welcome developments has been the introduction of the pause mechanism. This means that any new request for a notice or diffusion submitted through I-link, will only be visible to NCBs and authorised entities once a compliance check has been conducted by the General Secretariat and no compliance issues have been identified. Already we have seen from spot checks conducted, the effective implementation of this new mechanism. It is envisaged that going forward, this mechanism will continue to improve the quality of all data recorded in INTERPOL's Files.
12. The second advancement noted by CCF was the adoption of the new guidelines for processing information concerning individuals who have been awarded refugee status. These guidelines are in effect a much needed step by INTERPOL and its member countries to ensure they are at the fore in protecting the rights of individuals, at international level. Refugee status is a protected status, only awarded in certain specific circumstances and the protections it affords are widely recognised. The new guidelines are in line with these protections and with the international principle of *non-refoulement*.
13. Additionally, CCF noted last year the creation of the Data Protection Officer post, within INTERPOL. We welcome the appointment of the Data Protection Officer, and reiterate our hope that the initial meetings held with her, will develop into a close, cooperative and efficient working relationship. We look forward to developing a fruitful partnership with this office and envisage that the new level of internal controls, which it will provide, will help CCF in fulfilling its roles.
14. Finally, the Working Group on the Processing of Data, which was mandated to carry out a comprehensive review of all INTERPOL's supervisory mechanisms, recently held its inaugural meeting. CCF contributed to this meeting and looks forward to further participation in the coming meetings. CCF has already identified issues related to data quality and effective remedies to remain at the forefront of these discussions. The higher the quality of data stored in INTERPOL's Files and the stronger the checks conducted on this data, the better for INTERPOL and the individuals concerned.
15. In this changing environment, CCF strives to evolve as required to face these new challenges. Accordingly, over the last year we have adopted a number of immediate changes to our procedures.
16. A challenge constantly faced by CCF is treating the increasing number of individual requests it receives in a timely manner. In order to deal with this, and in an effort to speed up the processing of individual requests, CCF has taken a number of actions. Over the last year, it has extended the number of its sessions from three to four per year, and

it has extended the duration of each session from two to three days. Whereas CCF met six days per year until 2014, it will meet for twelve days during 2015.

17. CCF members and CCF secretariat also share a constant relationship outside the sessions. In cases raising concerns, CCF has also started to recommend the removal of extracts of notices from the public website, while it conducts its initial review. CCF, in providing its conclusions on individual requests, now offers further motivations.
18. Additionally, CCF is trialling a new approach to the handling of access requests. It is hoped this approach will make the process quicker, involve less extensive communication with the source NCB, and provide individuals with the appropriate information, without unnecessary delays. The implementation of this new measure was taken in light of the continued expansion and evolution of access rights for individuals at international level.
19. All of these developments have been made with a view to provide more efficient advice and recommendations, with the aim of establishing faster and more transparent exchanges with INTERPOL's General Secretariat, NCBs and requesting parties.
20. In handling individual requests it receives, CCF deals with a large number of specialized lawyers, who have detailed knowledge of INTERPOL.
21. This increase in interest is also apparent in the number of requests received from journalists and NGOs concerning the actions of INTERPOL and CCF, as well as a growing number of articles, regularly published in the media. This increased scrutiny at international level makes INTERPOL strive even more in ensuring that its rules and procedures are being appropriately applied to uphold individual's rights and protect the credibility of its operations.
22. The requirement for the existence of an individual's effective participation is established in INTERPOL's Rules on the Processing of Data, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2011, and also the implementing rules adopted by IPSG.
23. When it corresponds with NCBs, CCF is not looking to establish whether the offence an individual is accused of, has actually been committed, as this would be outside its remit. Instead it seeks to establish whether sufficient elements exist, describing the activities of that individual in relation to the crimes of which he or she has been accused, and the role which he or she played. However, it is crucial that these elements provide a concrete link between the individual and the offence that he or she is accused of committing.
24. NCBs should pay attention to the fact that when clear elements of effective participation are not provided, CCF has the obligation to ask for clarity. The additional information supplied is then evaluated in relation to the information that has been provided by the requesting party.
25. Finally, CCF continues to remind NCBs that, for the protection of individual's rights, it is essential to provide requesting parties with a certain minimum level of information in a timely manner. We suggest that this minimum level should confirm whether or not there is information recorded in INTERPOL's Files, and if so, provide the details of the charge, the arrest warrant, and confirm whether a red notice has been issued. CCF has strictly applied these requirements, in order to allow individuals access to any information concerning

them, recorded in INTERPOL's files, and to protect their rights to due process of law and a fair defence.

26. It is also important to note the essential relationship that exists between CCF and NCBs. Many NCBs were able to respond appropriately and provide CCF with the additional information and clarifications required, and, this largely resulted in CCF finding that the information recorded in INTERPOL's Files was compliant with its rules.
27. Additionally, CCF realizes that many NCBs who cooperate with it want to be frequently updated on the status of ongoing cases. However, due to the number of cases handled by CCF and the current resources available to it, it is not possible to provide constant updates. Instead CCF endeavours to contact NCBs at each important step in a case. NCBs should be aware that despite this, in the first ten months of 2015, CCF has already sent more than 900 messages to various NCBs.
28. As we have seen, new challenges and concerns continue to arise for INTERPOL. However, we have also seen the introduction of welcome developments, which are the first steps towards addressing these and any further challenges which may be encountered in the future.
29. In the face of these new developments, stagnation and failure to react can prove most costly for INTERPOL. However, with an open mind to continued evolution and a commitment to maintain the progress made, there is no reason why INTERPOL in cooperation with the NCBs cannot be at the forefront of addressing issues of basic human rights and ensuring the appropriate controls of information in its files, while maintaining its fight against international crime.
30. I would like to conclude simply by asking myself this question: "How would Interpol survive in this hectic police world without a body like the CCF?"
31. On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank you for your valued attention.