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PREFACE

Dear Reader,



On 7 September 1923, representatives from 20 countries signed an agreement establishing the first international organisation dedicated to criminal police cooperation.

The creation of the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) – the forefather of INTERPOL – was aimed at bridging the security gaps emerging from a lack of information sharing and mutual assistance across borders.

During his opening speech to the ICPC in 1923, Dr Johannes Schober, President of the Vienna Police and INTERPOL's Founder, said that *'even in the midst of oppositions between the nations of the earth, the Congress would unite people above the political battle, because police cooperation was »not a political but a cultural goal«* '.

These words still ring true today, as evidenced by the contributions to this periodical.

As well as providing an insight into the challenges facing national law enforcement, the underlying theme is that no country, or region can combat these threats alone.

Information sharing and data is the lifeblood of effective international police cooperation, and by connecting our now 195 member countries, INTERPOL provides a unique and global platform to achieve this.

A centenary is clearly a moment for reflection, to consider the achievements made, but it is also a time to look forward, to the successes yet to come.

On behalf of INTERPOL, I thank all those who have taken the time to contribute to this important body of work, and to the Hungarian authorities for this initiative and their continued support to global policing.

It is with a sense of purpose and a unified recognition of our collective efforts, that we mark 100 years of INTERPOL, 100 years of international police cooperation and 100 years of making the world a safer place.

Jürgen Stock
Secretary General
INTERPOL



INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,



You are holding in your hands the latest thematic issue of *Belügyi Szemle*, the professional and scientific journal of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior. The aim of this publication is to commemorate the centenary of the founding of INTERPOL, which comprises 195 member countries, by covering the circumstances of its establishment, its milestones to date and its future prospects, and to make it available in both Hungarian and English.

The articles in this commemorative issue are written by some of the organisation's distinguished and highly skilled colleagues, both past and present, and the practitioners associated with them. The fact that INTERPOL has recognised the importance of direct professional communication as a primary and indispensable condition for effective international cooperation is of particular value. INTERPOL's successful work demonstrates the power of communication and dialogue between national police organisations working together with a professional focus on law enforcement and crime prevention.

Since the creation of INTERPOL, the world has seen a huge technological evolution: from paper to digital technology, from simple computers to artificial intelligence. Today, almost all of its Member States are making efficient and effective use of the improvements brought about by technological progress.

Even though the digital world is becoming more and more advanced, the human factor is an indispensable factor in the international cooperation of national law enforcement organisations, which is reflected in the preparedness, knowledge, experience and personal character of police officers. Every day, we see that the professionals of the INTERPOL family serve the cause of international law enforcement with the same enthusiasm and dedication as the founders, but with a wealth of knowledge that has been developed together.

A system of cooperation built up in this way can also effectively combat international criminal organisations with unlimited material and technical resources. I dedicate this jubilee issue to the theoreticians and practitioners of law enforcement, to the members of INTERPOL, which is celebrating its centenary year, and to the general public interested in law enforcement, including crime prevention.

Sándor Pintér

Dr, Minister of Interior,
Deputy Prime Minister
Ministry of the Interior, Hungary

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Reader,



Exactly one hundred years ago, a conference took place in Vienna, which may undoubtedly be described as a milestone in the fight against international crime.

In 1914, a congress had already been convened in Monaco addressing the international cooperation among police forces. However, the meeting ended without concrete results.

It was in September 1923 when Vienna Police Commissioner Dr Johannes Schober invited police chiefs from all over the world to the Second International Criminal Police Conference. On the last day of that conference, the 7th of September 1923, the organisation we all know today by the name of ‘INTERPOL’ was founded. The creation of INTERPOL has had a permanent and transformative effect on police cooperation around the world.

INTERPOL plays a central and leading role and has been supporting member countries to the fullest extent for a hundred years now. Worldwide international police cooperation is a key element in the modern-day fight against crime. In these fast-moving times, where criminals change and adapt their methods every day, international cooperation in the fight against crime is indispensable.

For decades, the Organisation has done a lot to build bridges and connect member countries in spite of their diversity. Each of the member countries should be committed to acknowledging INTERPOL’s merits in the fight against transnational crime.

In terms of area, Austria is a comparatively small country. That’s why we are all the more proud that INTERPOL’s impressive development began in Vienna – the 100-year anniversary is therefore of outstanding importance to Austria.

The Ministry of Interior of Austria would like to strengthen its strong ties with the world’s largest law enforcement organisation by hosting the 91st Session of the General Assembly in Vienna.

As Director of Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, who also holds the important role of Head of NCB Vienna, I would like to emphasize the crucial

importance of international police cooperation in all its forms. It's my firm commitment and endeavour to expand Austria's active role as a reliable and strong partner. New threats, in particular with regard to cybercrime, human trafficking or drug trafficking, require solidarity and close cooperation between INTERPOL Member States. New challenges can only be tackled together in the interest of a safer world!

Andreas Holzer

Director, major general

Criminal Intelligence

Service Austria

Memorable Moments from the Last 30 Years of INTERPOL



Máttyás Hegyaljai

Dr, Deputy State Secretary for
EU and International Affairs
Ministry of Interior,
Deputy State Secretariat for EU
and International Affairs
matyas.hegyaljai@bm.gov.hu

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study is to present, from the author's own point of view and based on his personal experience, the most significant changes in INTERPOL over the last 30 years in Hungary.

Methodology: In addition to the relevant literature and legislation, the author draws on his own lived experience to describe the past three decades of the organisation's 'close-up view of history'.

Findings: Looking at the history of INTERPOL, it can be seen that, in addition to the spirit of internationalism, regionalism and regional/continental cooperation have always played a crucial role in practice. In the beginning, partly due to a lack of technical development, this was a restraining force in day-to-day operations. However, INTERPOL has taken advantage of the opportunities offered by technical-digital developments to recognise the regionality of the way in which smaller entities are recognised and operate, thus contributing to the effectiveness of global INTERPOL. In Europe, this is represented by the INTERPOL European Commission. Likewise, an important means of enhancing effectiveness is INTERPOL's cooperation with other regional law enforcement organisations – in the case of Europe, this is the close working relationship that has been established between INTERPOL and Europol. All this could not be achieved without the added value through the National Centre Bureaus of the Member States, which in the case of Hungary is the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre.

Value: As a result of this overview, the reader can see the structure of the domestic system, its links with the international organisation, the relevant EU agencies and the structure and role of the committees of strategic importance.

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Keywords: INTERPOL, General Assembly, Executive Committee, INTERPOL European Commission

Introduction

The international organisation that is worth a hundred years can safely be said to have stood the test of time. Especially when it covers a period that included the Second World War, the subsequent Cold War, the Korean and Vietnam wars, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the split of the European West and East into communist and capitalist blocs, the revolutions in Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany, the emergence of international networks of mafias and organised crime, numerous terrorist attacks, migration crises, and the list of examples is endless.

This year we celebrate the centenary of the founding of INTERPOL, and Hungary should not be left out, as it was one of the twenty countries that established the organisation at the beginning of the 20th century ([URL1](#)). The idea is earlier, the precedent is the Monaco Police Congress, but Hungary was in a very different political and economic situation in 1914 than in Vienna in 1923. INTERPOL is not a police organisation with supranational powers, but a common network for cooperation between police forces in several countries ([Rostami & Jooj, 2021](#)). This gives me the opportunity to recall the last thirty years of this cooperation from a very particular perspective, from my own memories. I do not therefore intend to give a historical retrospective with facts and figures, but simply to mention a moment or an institution of the almost three decades in which I have been involved in some way.

National Central Bureau Budapest

Hungary, despite being a founding member, left the organisation in 1952 in the political climate of the 1950s and re-joined only in 1981.¹ At that time, the INTERPOL Hungarian National Central Bureau² was only a departmental body within the National Police Headquarters, and for years it carried out the tasks that its international cooperation obligations required it to perform. These were

1 At the 50th General Assembly of Interpol in Nice, 3–10 November 1981, 89 in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions.
2 As early as 1927, it was decided that each country should set up a national central bureau.

primarily the exchange of information, the translation and forwarding of various requests, the issuing and withdrawal of international warrants, the repatriation of arrested persons, cooperation in international mutual legal assistance matters, and participation in various seminars and conferences. The most important of these meetings was the annual INTERPOL General Assembly, which was usually attended by the National Police Chief and the current head of the NCB Budapest. Although decisions were taken here, for a long time we did not pay much attention to this cooperation, nor did we play a significant role in the development of the strategy.

In those years, the division of labour followed the classical scheme. Within the office there were two departments, one for specific cases, where the case handlers carried out their daily tasks on a line-by-line basis (either by country or by group of offences) using the communication channels of the time, the other department was exclusively responsible for translating documents in different languages.³ Today, we see day by day that in the modern world, without direct and secure communication, and especially without real-time channels, international communication cannot work, but thirty years ago there was only telex communication between the INTERPOL General Secretariat and the Member States. Although faxes could be used and computer links were beginning to be established, let us not forget that even the use of mobile telephones in Hungary only began to take off after 1994. The issuing of wanted persons also worked in such a way that each request had to be typed in by the clerk on a separate interface and then sent by telex, while fingerprints, for example, could only be sent by fax or letter. In the first case, there were quality shortcomings, and in the latter, the time needed for delivery. It is no coincidence that, in those days, INTERPOL's cooperation was much criticised, mainly because of its slowness, and so it was very often the case that police officers preferred to use direct channels rather than INTERPOL, which, of course, had disadvantages in addition to speed. On the one hand, not everyone had contacts with all countries, so more intensive cooperation was only an option in the case of neighbouring countries, and on the other hand, it was extremely difficult to use the information obtained in this way in the course of the criminal proceedings. The number of police officers with contacts was also limited, and their availability was obviously limited. So, there was a need for an organisation that could serve all police units and was not only available during office hours. 24-hour availability required an on-call system where the already limited number of officers had to be available at night, with a landline telephone connection.

3 The four official languages of INTERPOL are English, French, Spanish and Arabic, but we communicated in German instead of Arabic.

Europol

As the European Community became the European Union and thus a much more integrated form of cooperation, this integration has also been reflected in the field of criminal cooperation. In the light of this, the European Police Office (Europol) appeared on the scene, which, however much they tried to deny it, was a major competitor to INTERPOL, especially in Europe. The Member States began to use this channel more and more intensively, and cooperation with INTERPOL became increasingly marginalised. This was the situation even if, from the outset, experts believed that the two organisations should not compete, but should work together in a complementary way, taking advantage of their differences. For a long time this did not work in practice. The EU Member States increasingly used Europol among themselves for a number of reasons: in addition to geographical advantages the similarity of legal systems, the compatibility of organisational elements based on the structure of national police forces and the compatibility of police procedural techniques. This was coupled with a constantly evolving and tightening single European data protection regime, which all EU Member States must use and respect – not only among themselves, but also in their relations with third countries.

As the years passed, the need for the cooperation between the two organisations grew stronger and stronger, so communication and participation in mutual programmes intensified, and in 2009 an agreement was reached to install liaison officers in each other's centres. Europol gradually built up its own communication system, steadily expanding the liaison officer system and developing the 'one shop stop' principle, which meant that in each country a single unit would be set up to bring all international police communications under one umbrella. In Hungary, this organisational element became the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre.

International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre (ILECC)

At that time Hungary was not yet a member of the EU, but in 1998 accession negotiations could begin ([URL2](#)). This already included the creation of an International Crime Control Centre and the establishment of a liaison officer system. In order to meet this requirement, ILECC was set up in 1999. In addition to the Community requirement, the importance of setting up this new organisation was also demonstrated by the fact that a separate law was passed on the Centre, which also provided for INTERPOL's legal status. On the basis of Act LIV of

1999 on cooperation and exchange of information within the framework of the European Union Law Enforcement Information System and the International Criminal Police Organization, a central budgetary body was established under the control of the National Police Headquarters.⁴ This law also stipulates that in the course of cooperation with INTERPOL, the police will exchange information with member countries and the INTERPOL Secretariat General in accordance with the statutes and operating principles of the organisation. INTERPOL membership is considered an international commitment.⁵

Under ILECC, four units with departmental status were created. The INTERPOL NCB Budapest, the Europol National Unit (ENU), which became the Europol National Bureau, the International Information Unit and the SIRENE National Bureau (Hegyaljai, 2012). In 2002, a police liaison officer and then a customs liaison officer were posted to Europol's headquarters in The Hague, which was later expanded and became a part of ILECC under the name Europol Liaison Officer Office. Over the years, a number of minor and major changes have led to the current structure. The Directorate for International Criminal Cooperation, which includes the Department for Cooperation in Criminal Matters and the Department for Wanted Records Management, is directly subordinate to ILECC. The latter manages the Division for Management and Coordination and the Division for Data Processing and Service Support. The Interpol Hungarian National Bureau, the Division for International Information Exchange and the SIRENE Bureau are part of the Department for Cooperation in Criminal Matters. The Europol National Bureau operates under the name of the International Strategy Division, directly under the Directorate for International Criminal Cooperation.

From this structure, it can be seen that the relations between the various international organisations are not linear, nor are they strictly separated, but are integrated under a central management, given that this is the most effective way to eliminate possible duplication and overlaps. And nothing is better proof of its legitimacy than the last 25 years.

INTERPOL European Committee

What has been described above is the operational cooperation and, in general, the day-to-day, practical contacts, which ensure the continuity and effectiveness

4 Organisational and Operational Rules of the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre No 3/2015.

5 Act LIV of 1999 on cooperation and exchange of information within the framework of the European Union Law Enforcement Information System and the International Criminal Police Organization.

of the work of the member countries, but this does not in itself give INTERPOL as an international organisation a say in how it should develop its strategy, what issues it should address, what position it should take with international partners and, in general, what direction it should take in the future.

Although the annual General Assembly is INTERPOL's highest decision-making body, it takes decisions for the whole organisation and therefore for all its member countries worldwide. However, as the number of members increased, the need for a more restricted decision-making forum covering only one continent arose, and the system of regional conferences was created. These meetings typically discuss issues that concern the region and only take decisions that affect the countries concerned. The European Regional Conferences therefore have the power to take enforceable decisions for the region, to set up regional organisations or committees. This power was used to create the INTERPOL European Committee in 1991.

In order for a member country to have any form of influence on INTERPOL's decision-making process, its representative must have access to one of the decision-making or preparatory bodies. One such body is the INTERPOL European Committee. This is decided by application and nomination, but a specific feature of the system is that to have a realistic chance of getting in, a Member State needs to nominate an expert with sufficient experience, especially an INTERPOL background, to make a successful application. In addition to several years of experience, a candidate must also regularly participate in events such as international conferences, meetings, seminars, training courses. This is why it was a great success that the European Regional Conference in Tel Aviv in 2012 voted in favour of Hungary's candidate.

The members of the eight-member committee are elected by the European Regional Conference by simple majority for a four-year term. In practice, this means that two members are elected each year at the INTERPOL European Regional Conference meeting, thus ensuring rotation between countries and the principle of equality. The chairperson of the Committee is elected by secret ballot at the Committee meeting for a one-year renewable term.⁶ If a member is unable to attend at least three meetings a year, a new member may be elected by decision of the European Regional Conference. Representation of all the countries of the European region is achieved by eight members representing not only their own country but also six to eight other countries. Three ordinary meetings are held each year (usually in February, September and November), but extraordinary meetings can be organised in case of need. In addition to the

6 Hungary gained membership from 2012–2016, including three years as president.

members, the Chair, Vice-Chairs and members of the Executive Committee are invited to attend the meetings, as well as other organisations and experts on committee decision. In general, the Secretary General of INTERPOL, the Special Representative in Brussels, the INTERPOL Liaison Officer seconded to Europol, the Europol Liaison Officer seconded to INTERPOL, the responsible Directors and experts in the relevant subjects and external experts on an ad hoc basis are invited, but they do not have the right to vote. The Committee shall have a quorum if half of its members are present. Each member has one vote and decisions are taken by simple majority (Hegyaljai, 2017).

INTERPOL Executive Committee

The 13-member body oversees the operation and activities of INTERPOL, where each continent is represented and where the INTERPOL President is also the chair of the committee. Members are elected for a term of 1–3 years at the INTERPOL General Assembly. In this context, it is of great importance that a representative of a Member State is able to become a member. The greatest Hungarian success in the history of INTERPOL so far is that Hungary was able to nominate a candidate who won a significant majority of the votes of the member states at the 2016 INTERPOL General Assembly in Indonesia, and thus became a member of the Commission. In the previous chapter, it was already mentioned that the candidate for the INTERPOL European Committee has to be ‘built up’ for the candidature, but for this forum this statement is much more valid, as here it is not only the European votes that have to be obtained, but also the majority votes of all member states. Looking at each election, it is safe to say that smaller countries are running at a significant disadvantage. In the process, each continent has a quota, and always applies for the vacant seat. Only countries from that continent can apply for the vacant seats, but each country votes for its candidate. This system is quite disadvantageous for less well-known countries. However, this inequality could be reduced by having only the countries of the region vote for the candidates for each regional seat, as they would know each other better, have a better idea of who is a reliable or punctual partner for cooperation, and take better account of the possibilities for rotation. This solution would, however, require a change to the Constitution of INTERPOL, which is currently not a reality.

General Assembly

As mentioned above, INTERPOL's main decision-making body is the INTERPOL General Assembly ([URL3](#)). It is held once a year and all countries are invited to the event, although not all 195 members attend. Decisions are taken by passing resolutions. These can include any decision relating to the operation of the organisation, which may include budget, strategy, programmes, activities, membership and staffing. They are prepared and placed on the agenda by the Executive Committee. Naturally, during the four-day meeting, in addition to resolutions, a wide range of topics will be discussed, taking into account crime trends and geographical specificities. The diversity of these is illustrated by the structure of the agenda of a General Assembly ([Barnett & Coleman, 2005](#)).

The event has a special, well-meaning multicultural atmosphere, as it brings together police chiefs from different continents. In addition to the lectures, there is also the opportunity to meet or negotiate bilaterally with representatives of countries with which cooperation is less intensive or with which it is otherwise not possible to have personal contacts because of geographical distances. On the margins of the General Assembly, and at the same time and in the same venue, a security exhibition is being held where the world's leading companies will present their latest developments, providing an opportunity to network with the private sector and even to do business.

Why does a country assume the responsibility of hosting a General Assembly when it requires significant financial and human resources? Prestige comes first. Secondly, it gives a much better chance of getting into the international law enforcement circulation. Thirdly, there is the opportunity for a country to show its commitment to law enforcement. If successful, the system developed can serve as an example for other partners. If it is not, it can use this event to show that it is ready to play a bigger role and also to show where it needs support. For countries that are less well known or smaller globally, hosting a conference, usually with around a thousand participants, is a particularly good opportunity. The choice of which country can host the General Assembly depends on both who applies to host it and whether the General Assembly accepts the right to host it.

In addition to the fact that Hungary regularly participates in these meetings as a member, it should also be remembered that in 2001 Hungary hosted the 70th General Assembly of INTERPOL in Budapest. One of its special features was that it took place two weeks after the terrorist attack on the United States. The possibility of postponing the event was raised on several occasions, as the terrorist threat was extremely high in many countries. And then, at the start of

the opening session, the power went out in the conference room for a minute. Fortunately, it was just a technical problem.

Despite the concerns, Hungary agreed to host the event and we are proud to say that it was a great success.

This year's 91st INTERPOL General Assembly will symbolically take place in Vienna, where the Hungarian delegation will be present as it was 100 years ago.

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URL3: *General Assembly*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/Governance/General-Assembly>

Laws and Regulations

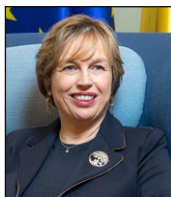
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A Glimpse at International Police Cooperation



Catherine De Bolle

Executive Director
Europol
CAB@europol.europa.eu

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study is to mark the centenary of the establishment of INTERPOL and underline the need for innovative approaches to international police cooperation.

Methodology: The study is based on the personal recollections of practitioner.

Findings: Effective tackling of global criminal challenges, in particular those emerging from technological advancements and globalisation, undoubtedly requires more networked international police cooperation not limited to national law enforcement bodies. International police cooperation and intelligence sharing structures have been continuously seeking an upgrade and agencies such as INTERPOL and Europol play a crucial role in facilitating the innovative process and adequate support to national law enforcement authorities. In this contribution, the author reflects about her experience as a member of the INTERPOL Executive Committee and as Executive Director of Europol looking at the recent transformation of international police cooperation, providing clues on the prevailing challenges and the need to identify innovative approaches to the fight against serious and organised crime through multi-disciplinary partnerships and engagements.

Value: The study shows the personal insider experiences of a senior police executive at national and international level (INTERPOL and Europol).

Keywords: INTERPOL Executive Committee, international police cooperation, law enforcement, fight against organised crime

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The architecture of international police cooperation looks fundamentally different today than it did at the start of the 20th century when the International Police Congress decided to establish INTERPOL as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) at its meeting in Vienna on 7 September 1923. While the architecture and practices of police cooperation have changed, their operating environment has completely transformed over the last twenty years, possibly more than in the previous 80 years. Indeed, with the greater hold of information technology on society, comes the greater dominance of speed and accelerating change.

The rapid pace of technological advancement, coupled with intense globalisation, has led to a highly interconnected world, characterised by the unprecedented movement of goods, services, people and ideas both across and within borders. These changes have fundamentally altered the nature of threats to international society. Global organised crime constitutes now a growing challenge for law enforcement authorities in every country. Criminal actors will soon carry out almost all of their business as part of a virtual and global criminal underworld, which knows no borders or jurisdictions. However, the dimension of the problem has not entailed a parallel globalisation of law enforcement cooperation to a degree necessary to effectively counter the threat.

The centenary of the foundation of INTERPOL is a good opportunity to pause and reflect on the recent transformations of international police cooperation. This publication is an excellent occasion for me to share some thoughts based on my experience at both INTERPOL and Europol.

My Experience at the INTERPOL Executive Committee

In November 2015, in the Rwandan capital Kigali, the INTERPOL General Assembly elected me as European representative on the INTERPOL Executive Committee. At the time, I was Commissioner General of the Belgian Federal Police and was the first Belgian to occupy this position. The INTERPOL Executive Committee was presided by Mireille Ballestrazzi from France who did a wonderful work. My three-year tenure in the governing body of INTERPOL in charge of supervising the execution of the General Assembly's decisions and the administration and work of the General Secretariat was particularly interesting and rewarding, professionally and personally. My objectives at the Executive Committee were to promote transparency in international police and advocate better access for Member States to information, as well as a strengthened approach to terrorism, foreign fighters, cybercrime and large-scale drug trafficking.

This period also coincided with a very complex and difficult time back home with the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016. One key lesson from that experience was that cooperation at all levels is vital. There was a critical need to cooperate with all the services involved at national level, but also on the European and international levels.

Both experiences and, in particular, the opportunity of combining national and international responsibilities, very much shaped my vision of international police cooperation and allowed me to draw a number of assumptions, which I would summarise around three basic features.

First, is the commonality of many policing challenges to most countries, despite the very different police cultures, constituencies, political systems and economic capacity. Often, the issues are the same or very similar in most countries, most often revolving around resources, both human and financial. This is a structural and enduring issue, which affects all police forces on a global level, although obviously the baseline is not same in all countries, nor are the needs. One key aspect is about having the right profiles to carry out complex and highly specialised tasks in the context of a competitive job market. This requires constant (re)prioritisation and (re)assessment of where law enforcement should deliver, where to outsource and where private sector solutions are preferable. Police forces need investing constantly in training and upskilling of staff to keep up with new and emerging technologies. At the same time, retaining talent becomes challenging as expert law enforcement specialists are often attracted by other actors like internet service providers, social media companies or financial institutions.

Despite the resource and technological gaps between the police forces of our respective constituencies, all members of the Executive Community had a deep awareness that the technological changes were fundamentally affecting national and international policing. It was clear that in order to provide for future effective policing, all law enforcement agencies – irrespective of their size and capacity – had to address as a priority the continuous and swift digital transformation.

A second lesson-learnt is about the politics of policing. Law enforcement is by essence a governmental function and, as such is connected to a multitude of actors involved in the conduct of government. The police, perhaps more than any other government entity, functions in a complex political environment in the broader sense of the term. However, police officials represented in the INTERPOL Executive Committee had a genuine interest in pursuing a professional policing approach aimed at serving the public interest, while avoiding political influence by partisan politics. The general goal was to ensure impartiality and neutrality, and thus non-arbitrary lawful professional decision-making

by the police leadership. Certainly, the political context varies from country to country and the rule of law and democratic policing do not have the same significance in all parts of the world. Political and cultural realities shape policing. If the State system has not adopted democratic values, the police is not likely to defend such values. Police come from the society they police and will adopt and express similar attitudes. However, there was a shared concern of the need to ensure autonomy and operational independence. As the European representative in the Executive Committee, my role was to promote democratic policing, the rule of law, the respect for fundamental rights, accountability, police legitimacy and gender balance. One important achievement was the establishment in 2016 of an initial compliance checks and control system for INTERPOL notices. Indeed, the Notices and Diffusions Task Force (NDF), comprised of lawyers, police officers and operations specialists, was created to conduct a quality and legal compliance review of incoming Notice and Diffusion requests prior to their authorisation by the General Secretariat. In 2018, this capability was expanded to review existing Red Notices and Wanted Persons Diffusions (WPDs). There was also a noticeable improvement in women's representation in INTERPOL, for example in the legal service.

A third aspect, I would like to highlight is the importance of trust and confidence, internally and externally. Senior police officials are acutely aware that their institutions are entrusted with important powers that can affect people's lives. Such public offices are position of trust, implying a duty to act in the public interest. The concept of policing by consent is central to the model of policing in the European Union and other European countries and asserts that the power of police to execute their duties depends on the common consent of the public. For this to be effective, the police require the trust and confidence of the public. At an internal level, within the Executive Committee, I was positively surprised by the level of trust and confidence among its members. We could openly discuss all issues, even sensitive ones, in an honest and frank environment. In this regard, there was a sense of belonging to a professional police community, despite the cultural and political differences. Probably because at the end of the day we shared many concerns about resources, the well-being of police officers or the need to avoid political interferences.

The Cornerstone of International Police Cooperation

The sharing of intelligence has been the traditional Achilles heel of international policing. In view of the growing complexity and sophistication of organised

crime, there is a need to provide a more sophisticated international response and upgrade the global intelligence-sharing structure and information management architecture. Most sharing of information continues to be driven by specific criminal investigations, while it should be a routine act. Sharing and exchanging law-enforcement information between countries and with relevant international law enforcement agencies is best achieved through building trust, rather than creating obligations. In this trust-building process, it is useful to reach a common understanding on the use to be given to the information and how it will support joint analysis and decision-making, for example by defining the objectives of information-sharing and the specific intelligence products, which should result from it.

Throughout my national and international experience in police cooperation, I observed that, all too often, there remains some level of reluctance among countries to exchange information. In some cases, this affects how we detect certain criminal groups, identify specific threats or manage difficulties in organising ourselves at a national and international level. If we want to progress, we need to abandon these reservations. We must build on our commonalities and grow as one law enforcement family, more open and transparent with each other.

It is evident to me that, after one hundred years of police cooperation and of INTERPOL's existence, we can do more to improve the exchange of information on a global level. I am convinced that international cooperation should not be limited to a central national level and that – where possible – it is our responsibility to connect further at a decentralised level in order to get the right information to and from the right place. For non-common law countries, a closer relationship with the judiciary at national level will also be crucial, as the judiciary often determines the scope of the investigation. This is not easily achieved. It will require efforts in each Member State of the European Union at the organisational, technical and functional level. However, it is possible to do it, as is the case in my home country Belgium, which has recently taken initial steps in that direction.

At the European level, we cannot expect the EU to take on all specific national criminal threats and priorities at once. This highlights the importance of adopting a methodological and planned approach such as the EMPACT cycle. I am absolutely convinced that this is the right way to tackle serious and organised crime operating at the international level. However, these mechanisms need to focus even further on tangible operational action. I sincerely hope that, if all Member States and agencies commit to this, we will end up with evaluation reports showing concrete outcomes, such as the number of arrests and criminal groups disrupted, instead of seeing reports calling for more operational actions

and the appointment of drivers with the right profiles. Furthermore, I believe it is very important for INTERPOL to become a partner in these projects, whenever possible and deemed relevant.

The Technological White Whale

Policing and police forces are being shaped by technology, not the other way around. Yet, technological advances hold significant opportunities for a more efficient and effective exchange and analysis of information. Technology can also transform the way we approach international police cooperation. This path however is not a straightforward one.

In the EU, as well as at global level, initiatives to maximise on these advances are being launched. One example is the much-needed interoperability project, which aims at enhancing cooperation with INTERPOL and Europol and at enhancing the investment into Artificial Intelligence. The success of the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) proves that well-functioning tools quickly improve information flows and generate ideas for further development.

Additionally, innovation is crucial to stay on top of policing issues in today's fast-changing world where criminals are quick to exploit technology and opportunities. Both Europol and INTERPOL continuously invest in Innovation and Research. This means that, in this area as well, there is strong need to ensure complementarity between both institutions in order to avoid overlap. We need to ensure that, based on our mandate and roles, we can adequately support national authorities that need technological support.

At the same time, as police we need to respect data protection and human rights. I remain strongly convinced that this aspect of law enforcement work is a fundamental necessity. However, recent developments at the national and EU levels indicate that it is sometimes challenging. For INTERPOL, at a global level, implementation of certain rules may be even more challenging. International law enforcement can benefit from an increasing role of INTERPOL in this area, in terms of awareness-raising and expertise on Data Protection frameworks that are being implemented worldwide.

A Global Outlook

Security threats are not confined by borders anymore. Internal and global security are mutually dependent and interlinked. Many of today's internal security

concerns originate from instability in many countries' neighbourhood and from changing forms of violence. Nations with scarce resources or where there is a security vacuum can become safe havens for criminal organisations or terrorist groups. Local police services often do not have the means or the will to effectively deal with the problem and in the absence of adequate funding they are more vulnerable to corruption. The increasing sophistication of modern technology also creates a global divide between the have and have not.

In this context, organisations such as INTERPOL and Europol need to have the ability to respond to a highly dynamic and diverse criminal landscape. Global criminal challenges require quick responses and solutions that can only be delivered by agile organisations that embrace change but who also work jointly in complementarity. Therefore, progress needs to be made in developing security responses and solutions in cooperation with INTERPOL. A clear example of this is the problem of foreign fighters, which requires cooperation between EU and non-EU countries.

Europol and INTERPOL have as their primary customers national law enforcement authorities. We must work for the benefit of ours by setting common strategic goals, agreeing on operational objectives, and carrying out joint activities and this in complementarity.

Conclusion

International police cooperation cannot continue to be organised by geography only, while crime is not. This calls for a more networked, context-aware and knowledge-sharing approach to international police co-operation. Social interconnectivity and interdependency require a parallel inclusive approach on the part of law enforcement and innovative approaches to crime management. This is best achieved through multi-disciplinary partnerships with civil society and the industry, as well as targeted engagement with sector-specific actors. The international framework should support a multi-actor environment in which all relevant stakeholders can perform their respective roles without unnecessary competition, overlaps or redundancies. International law enforcement organisations must certainly respect sovereignty issues and national systems, but at the same time have to be able to adapt to changing realities and transcend constituencies in a pragmatic way.

It should also be possible to envisage an international responsibility to protect also in the context of transnational crime. Every State should have the responsibility to provide its own police authorities with the tools and competences to

engage in the internationalisation of their national law and order infrastructures. Staying local or going at it alone is not an option anymore. Here, international police cooperation organisations have a legitimate role and opportunity for engagement by enhancing operational cooperation, raising awareness, supporting the contracting environment and building capacity.

International law enforcement agencies must continue to create a secure environment and protect citizens by focusing on strengths while ensuring complementarity. They must become shock-resistant by design, able to quickly absorb change and implement efficient responses to meet the challenges of emerging threats and to effectively protect individuals and the most vulnerable.

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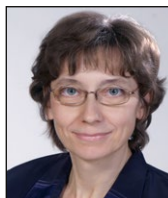
INTERPOL 100

‘Connecting Police For a Safer World’



János Sallai

Prof. Dr, Head of Department,
professor, police colonel
University of Public Service,
Faculty of Law Enforcement
sallai.janos@uni-nke.hu



Judit Borszéki

PhD, associate professor
University of Public Service,
Faculty of Law Enforcement
borszeki.judit@uni-nke.hu



Abstract

Aim: The aim of this paper is to outline the century-long, instructive history of international police cooperation.

Methodology: The authors of the paper analyse and organise the pre-WWII Hungarian and contemporary English literature, as well as the data published on the INTERPOL website to mark the anniversary.

Findings: The predecessor organisation was set up in 1923 with the idea that police forces in different countries should work together to detect crime and curb cross-border crime through arrest and extradition procedures, identification techniques and criminal records. Many of the objectives and tools of that time are still the basis for joint work today. As security challenges and international organised crime activities and technological responses to them evolved, INTERPOL grew into the effective international organisation that now supports and coordinates the work of law enforcement agencies in 195 countries.

Value: This milestone anniversary of INTERPOL provides an opportunity to look back over the last century of international police cooperation. The study takes a fresh look at the subject. It briefly presents the contemporary Hungarian reception of the initial steps in organisational and technical development, INTERPOL’s own assessment of the past 100 years, and the analyses of certain periods published by foreign experts on the subject.

Keywords: police, globalisation, INTERPOL, international cooperation

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Introduction

Globalisation probably began in 1492, when Columbus' ships set out to explore a new continent. After that, continents that had previously seemed unknown were continually being explored and intercontinental trade and movement of people began. The next big wave of globalisation was boosted by the industrial revolutions. The spread of steam trains and ships gradually reduced the distances between continents and states. The opportunity to travel was not only a benefit for industry and people who wanted to travel, but also for scammers, criminals and those who wanted to evade prosecution. The perpetrators of the various crimes, when the situation became increasingly dangerous for them, took advantage of the fast rail and later automobile transport and fled. They travelled first to other cities and then to other countries. In the newly discovered continents, opportunities, new investments and the building of railways attracted millions of settlers to the 'New World'. Alongside emigration from Europe and the migration of labour due to industrial development, crime also internationalised. In the 20th century, globalisation accelerated with the development of transport, the emergence and rapid expansion of air transport and the explosion of the data revolution. The effects of the industrial revolutions, with the spread of mass-produced goods and the introduction of the Morse telegraph and telephone, have contributed greatly to the deepening of internationalisation, changed lifestyles, boosted international tourism, international trade and economic life, and created new forms of money and securities (paper money, bills of exchange, shares), all of which have also provided opportunities for the spread of international crime. In the 19th century, with the emergence of modern law enforcement, the need for international cooperation to detect and arrest criminals moving between states arose (No Author, 1905).

At first, this took the form of 'friendly' international police congresses. The first manifestations of police cooperation were the congresses for cooperation against anarchism in Rome and St Petersburg, and the meeting in Paris¹ to prevent the trafficking of girls. With the spread of motorisation came the need for international regulations on transport, which was established at the 1909 International Conference of Automobile Clubs in Paris. *'Between 5 and 11 October 1909, representatives of the following countries met in Paris to negotiate a system for regulating the international circulation of motor vehicles on the*

1 Later, in 1910, Dr. Vilmos Lers, Minister Counsellor for Trade, was sent to Paris on behalf of Hungary *'to sign the international convention on the suppression of the trade in girl children and the international agreement on the suppression of the circulation of vulgar publications'*. (National Archives of Hungary, s.a.).

basis of uniform principles: the United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Monaco, Montenegro, Italy, Russia, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Serbia. (URL2). Subsequently, in 1914, at the Monaco Police Congress, the idea of real international police cooperation and its implementation came to the fore, with the foreign policy actors being marginalised. The First World War put these initiatives on hold for a time, but after the war, international police conferences were held again, and the statements made at these conferences led to the establishment of INTERPOL, after known as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), on 7 September 1923 (Sallai & Borszéli, 2022).

The need for international police cooperation came to the fore at the first international conference in Hamburg in 1905. The founding father of INTERPOL was Edmond Locard,² who realised in the early 1900s that *'to fight international crime, an international police force must be used'* (URL1). Later, its main supporter was Prince Albert of Monaco, who was a significant contributor to the formation of the Monaco Conference. This was followed by the tangible initiative of Johannes Schober,³ Vienna's Chief of Police, which led to the practical establishment of an organisation for international cooperation in criminal matters on 7 September 1923. *'In 1923, he organised the II International Criminal Police Congress in his hometown of Perg, Upper Austria, where police organisations from nineteen countries were represented. It was agreed at the meeting that the participating countries would set up the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), whose constitution, consisting of ten articles, was adopted.'* (URL3).

2023 will mark one hundred years of this, a century in which international police cooperation has steadily developed, while the number of Member States has grown. In our study, we look at the major events of this century. While there is a wealth of literature on the subject, we will only focus on the most important and interesting events due to space constraints.

2 French professor Edmond Locard, founder of the first forensic laboratory and catalyst for international police cooperation.

3 Johann Schober (1874–1932, Austrian police officer, chief captain of Vienna and later chancellor of Austria for two terms.

The Evolution of the Idea of International Police Cooperation in the Light of Contemporary Hungarian Sources

The beginnings of international police cooperation can be traced back to the first decades of the 19th century, when international friendships and acquaintanceships between police officers began. Its main mission is to see how police forces in different countries can work together without politicians being involved. The first international police congress could have been held in Budapest, if the people behind the idea had been able to organise the event for the millennium. The idea was reported in the *Budapesti Hírlap* in 1895 as follows. '*This international congress on public security, the plan of which was put forward by the editorial staff of the Rendőri Lapok,*⁴ *was received with great approval in the highest circles, and all support was promised, and the congress has already been booked by the exhibition's management. Originally, only a national congress on public security was planned, but foreign countries expressed such great interest in this congress that an international congress, with the consent of the competent circles, seemed to be assured in advance.*' (*Budapesti Hírlap*, 1895). For various reasons the planned event did not take place, and for a long time, until 1930, Hungary did not host an international police conference. The public security exhibition planned as part of the millennium was also cancelled.

With a purpose to develop international cooperation, police conferences and meetings of an international character were held in Buenos Aires in 1905, Madrid in 1909, San Paolo in 1912, Washington in 1913 and Monaco from 14–19 April 1914 (First International Criminal Police Congress, 1914). But the latter was more than a networking meeting of international police officers. Here, participants⁵ have already sought to achieve the following specific cooperation.

- *Improving direct and official relationships between police forces in various countries.*
- *Free use of postal, telephone and telegram services for police forces to facilitate arrests.*
- *Using the same language during cooperation.*⁶

4 Police Gazettes.

5 The Hungarian police were represented by Béla Gábor and Jenő Marinovich (Magyar Rendőr, 1939).

6 '*The then Superintendent of the Municipal Police of Paris, Lucien Mouquin proposed the adoption of the Esperanto constructed language as a single contact and auxiliary language. The reason given for his proposal was that an international organisation had already been set up in Antwerp in 1911, whose members were police officers who could speak Esperanto and which also published a police journal. Mouquin was unable to get the proposal accepted because the multilinguals attending the congress did not want to give up this advantage and, under the guise of doing so, questioned the usability of the constructed language. This decision could not, of course, stop the development of Esperanto, but it neither solved the problem.*' (Tóth, 1938).

- *Forensic science training should be provided for law and law enforcement students.*
- *Increasing the number of law enforcement and police academies in the countries.*
- *Establish an identification system to identify international offenders.*
- *Creation of a central registry database repository.*
- *Study and create a model extradition treaty to assist in the surveillance of criminals.*
- *Direct and immediate transmission of extradition requests.*
- *Working together for rapid extradition.* (Sallai, 2022).

These ideas proved to be an illusion in the second half of the 1910s, as the Great War took place. As with so much else, the First World War put a brake on international police cooperation.

At the same time, during the First World War, Albert Irk, in his notes on criminology, highlighted the need for international cooperation as the only solution against international commercial criminals. In his opinion, *‘the two main symptoms of the modern development of criminality are the specialisation and the internationalisation of the miscreant.’* (Irk, 1915). According to Irk, states cannot be effective against international miscreants if they only act in isolation. Only organised international action is the solution. In our opinion, Irk was before his time when he stated that *‘the international police intelligence office would be at the centre of the organisation. It would be the point where the telephone networks of the police authorities of the various states would converge.’* (Irk, 1915). The main task of this new international police organisation would be to solve theoretical and scientific questions and to take practical action (Irk, 1915) against the most dangerous international criminals, including the international hotel thieves, cashiers, merchants, etc., and to control the international financial market and stock exchange. Irk considered that an international laboratory was essential for practical cooperation, so that investigations could be supported. He saw all this as impracticable only after the war.

At the same time, countries had already recognised the importance of extraditing international criminals, but at the time this was only achieved through bilateral treaties.

The fact that international police cooperation, as formulated in Monaco, is not a utopia was confirmed by the police conferences that were re-launched immediately after the peace treaties that ended the First World War. The first sign of this was the initiative taken by Dutch police officer Van Hauten in 1920, which,

at the time, was premature, but as the preservation of his name suggests, it did not become a mere cry for help.

In 1923, after the First World War, international crime statistics showed that crime levels were at their highest ever, regardless of whether a country was a winner or a loser. This situation forced the representatives of 20 states at the International Police Congress, convened in Vienna in September 1923, to create an institutional framework for international criminal cooperation, and the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) was established by unanimous decision. The novelty of this Organisation is that the Member States' administrations now cooperated to the exclusion of intermediate organisations. In order to ensure effective international cooperation, the following organisations have been set up for the international organisation.

- 1) *'News service on international offenders, international evidence.*
- 2) *International Register of Investigators.*
- 3) *International registry of dangerous public criminals.*
- 4) *International Radio communication Code for communication by telegraph between police authorities.'* (Schober, 1927).

One of the most important areas of international police cooperation, which was stepped up in 1923, was the implementation of the exchange of information. A new form of this was first implemented at Member State level, police radio traffic, which later led to the implementation of image transmission. This could have raised the international practice of warrants to a higher level. The police radio could also ensure the rapid flow of information for the transmission of police news, the ordering of border closures, the issuing of standard measures, the targeting of offenders, etc. (Szentirmay, 1926).

As in national and international public life, security of persons and property has been in the centre of attention. To this end, a new police congress was convened in Berlin in 1926, and the Berlin International Police Exhibition was held in this context. The main aim of the Congress was to organise an international criminal police force and to set up an International Police Office under the supervision of the League of Nations. The main themes of the Congress were:

- Use of a plotter;
- The issue of misuse of firearms;
- Police emergency radio call;
- Introduction of a standardised registration form to establish identity;
- Fighting and protecting against illicit drug trafficking (Schober, 1927).

In parallel with the congress, an international police conference was organised to address the challenges of traffic policing and urban planning in the context of the motorisation of the transport sector, which had by then reached a significant scale. In addition to the Police Congress and Conference, the International Police Exhibition,⁷ organised for the public and the law enforcement professional community, was a great success with pavilions dedicated to police administration, law enforcement and criminal justice (Weninger, 1926). The Hungarian pavilion was also a great success, with an exhibition on riverside police, gendarmerie and police.

In the same year, the International Motor Vehicle Conference was held in Paris, where a number of international transport policy issues were discussed, mainly from the customs and border police aspects.

By the end of the 1920s, Hungarian law enforcement literature was already continuously reporting on the results of international police cooperation, congresses and ideas. Effective cooperation requires mutual knowledge between the police forces of the Member States, which is why the professional exchange visits have been launched. Within this framework, Hungarian police officers have visited Finland, Poland, Germany, France, Great Britain, etc. to get acquainted with the organisation and activities of the police forces there. Similarly, police officers from many countries have visited our country for similar purposes. In 1929, for example, the New York Police Commissioner, who had previously hosted the New York Police Congress twice, in 1921–23, and attended the founding congress of INTERPOL in Vienna in 1923, visited our country (MTI, 1929). The experience of mutual professional exchange led Carl Riege, a police major at the German Police Institute, to the conclusion in the pages of *Magyar Detektív* that it was time to organise a unified European police academy (Riege, 1928).

In the following periods, police congresses, committee meetings and mutual professional exchanges took place in order to make international police cooperation as effective as possible. Among these, the following international police events are outstanding, which will not be described in detail due to space limitations.

1927. Amsterdam (It was decided that each Member State should set up a central contact point.)

1930. International Police Radio Congress in Budapest.

1931. League of Nations Conference of Central Police Bureaux in Geneva.

7 With the participation of Argentina, Cuba, Gdansk, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Spain, Switzerland and Poland.

1932. International Police Congress in Rome (creation of the post of Secretary General).

1934. International Police Congress in Vienna.

1936. International Criminal Police Commission meeting in Belgrade (focusing on identification, passports and dactyloscopy).

1937. International Criminal Police Commission Congress in Amsterdam.⁸ (An interesting feature of the congress was that it made a special reference to women police officers, who were condemned by police participants at the time.)

1937. International Criminal Police Commission meeting in London.

1938. International Police Conference in Bucharest.

1938 was the last year of peace in which the representatives (police officers) of the Member States of the international police and crime organisation envisioned by Johann Schober could work together in an atmosphere of peace they had set themselves against international miscreants.

The first decades of INTERPOL can be summed up with the following reflections: *'The personal contact of people, the exchange of ideas, their debates, the affinities created at the green and white tables, the recognition and appreciation of values, agreements, the personal redemption of a common destiny and destiny are the real cohesive force that makes this international coexistence a permanent, living reality.'* (Nemzetközi együttműködés, 1938). By the late 1930s, there was international cooperation between police forces around the world, which ensured that international miscreants could not hide from accountability on Earth. At the now regular conferences, both professional and friendly relations were established between police officers, regardless of whether they represented opposing states. This was particularly important in the second half of the 1930s, when the signs of the outbreak of the Second World War were already becoming apparent. As an anchor for international police cooperation, *'Police oblige!'* has become a common saying and practice in public law enforcement life. (Nemzetközi együttműködés, 1938) And although the last police conference in Bucharest before the Second World War concluded with the representatives of the 23 nations talking about carrying on good practice and deepening friendly and professional relations, the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and the Nazi victory brought an end to this.

8 The police dictionary was presented at this congress, but so far no trace of it has been found. This dictionary contained the police terminology used in several languages at the time. The dictionary facilitated professional contacts. To the best of our knowledge, it was published in 5-6 (?) languages.

History of INTERPOL Based on English Language Sources

The Organisation's website ([URL4](#), [URL5](#)) also commemorates the centenary of its creation and highlights some of the most important milestones in INTERPOL's history. Researchers on the topic point out that in order to understand the organisation, current status and functioning of INTERPOL, it is essential to be aware of the historical antecedents that initiated international police cooperation and eventually led to the creation of an organisation that continues to coordinate such efforts today ([Calcara, 2022](#)).

Like many other researchers on the subject, INTERPOL considers the first congress of the International Criminal Police Organization, held in Monaco in 1914, to be the event that gave birth to the idea of the organisation, even before its formal foundation in 1923. According to their assessment, although the meeting was very successful, the outbreak of the First World War meant that the idea of an international police organisation would have to wait nearly a decade. The English-language literature also deals – among other things – with the 19th century antecedents as events in which the aspiration for international police cooperation is already really evident ([Sallai & Borszéli, 2022](#)), and also seeks the reasons for the relatively late establishment of the international organisation. In their view, the need for collective action against the anarchist movements against conservative, autocratic state institutions in the years after 1848 was one of the important factors that led to the first international conferences ([Calcara, 2020](#)). Other such factors were that police institutions were gradually freed from political policing functions and, as autonomous professional organisations, could focus on clearly criminal objectives ([Deflem, 2002a](#); [Calcara, 2022](#)) and establish channels of direct communication between themselves ([Jäger, 2019](#)). One of the aims of the first international conferences, including the Monaco conference in 1914, was to eliminate lengthy extradition procedures that required diplomatic intervention. The creation of a genuine police organisation required a shift of emphasis from legal and diplomatic initiatives and objectives to professional police and law enforcement aspects, and the delegates' states had to promote international police cooperation, for example by changing legislation, following the decisions taken at the conferences. These were all to be awaited until a decade after the First World War ([Jäger, 2019](#)).

INTERPOL considers 7 September 1923 as the next milestone on the way to the establishment of the Organisation, when the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) was founded at the initiative of the President of the Vienna Police, Dr Johannes Schober, at the Second International Police Congress in Vienna, attended by delegates from 20 countries, including Hungary ([URL4](#),

[URL5](#)). Calcara points out that although the meeting was in principle intended as a follow-up to the 1914 conference, the starting point was fundamentally different. Schober, who was a member of the police force, knew the mentality, practical needs, wishes and expectations of his colleagues regarding international police cooperation. It should also be mentioned that not only most European countries were represented at the event, but also China, Egypt, Japan and the USA ([Calcara, 2020](#)).

The overall aim of the ICPC was to facilitate mutual assistance between police forces in different countries. The structure and objectives of the Organisation were documented in several regulations.

The main objectives, which are still part of INTERPOL's activities today, included:

- Ensuring direct police communication;
- Cooperation in arrests and extraditions;
- Definition of common languages;
- Establishing offices to combat counterfeiting of currency, cheques and passports;
- Develop and establish fingerprinting techniques and registers.

Johannes Schober was president of the ICPC from its foundation until 1932. Austria offered to host and finance the headquarters of the Organisation in Vienna. Schober was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee and the lawyer Dr Oskar Dressler, head of the Austrian Federal Police, was appointed Secretary ([URL5](#)).

Changes and Main Stages of Organisational Development

The Organisation also cites the 4th General Assembly held in Amsterdam in 1927 as an important milestone, at which it was decided that each Member State should establish a central contact point within its police structure – the predecessor of today's national offices ([URL5](#)).

By 1930, special departments were set up to deal with criminal registers, counterfeiting and passport forgery ([URL5](#)).

In 1938, the German National Socialists replaced President Michael Skubl and took control of the ICPC. Most countries suspended their participation and the ICPC as an international organisation virtually ceased to exist. In 1942, the Organisation came under full German control and its headquarters were moved to Berlin. INTERPOL understandably does not detail these years in its own

history, but the English-language literature points out that, paradoxically, Nazi control was made possible by the Organisation's apolitical nature and its need to be free from legal constraints. The ICPC was set up without a legal contract. The way to become a member was not clearly defined: countries that were not represented at the 1923 Congress could join the ICPC by recruiting one of their police forces or even a single police officer, which was done by a simple registration and payment of the membership fee (Deflem, 2002a). The increased involvement of Nazi officials in the activities of the ICPC in the first half of the 1930s can be seen as a means of influencing the work of the Commission and gaining authority. It did not go unnoticed for long, but the members had no significant instrument to prevent it. As a result of the Anschluss, the presidency of the ICPC was quickly taken over by the Nazi regime and ceased to fulfil its original mandate, only to become an extremely dangerous instrument in the hands of the Nazi regime. A widely accepted theory is that the Nazi regime used the ICPC register to implement its nefarious policies. This theory is partly supported by the fact that even today it is unclear what became of these files (Calcara, 2020). The ICPC continued to operate – at least formally – during the war. However, when the US gained control of Berlin, its activities were abruptly suspended (Deflem, 2002b).

Following the Second World War, transnational crime has boomed across the European continent and the need to promote international police cooperation has been renewed (Calcara, 2020). The reconstitution of the Organisation was led by Belgium. In 1946, the ICPC adopted a new constitution, a democratic procedure was introduced for the election of the President and the Executive Committee, and the headquarters were moved to Paris, France.⁹ The same year, INTERPOL became the Organisation's telegraphic name. The INTERPOL logo and flag have been in use since 1950 (URL5).

In 1956, the participants in the Vienna General Assembly changed the name of the ICPC to the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL) by adopting a modernised Statute. The Organisation became autonomous by relying on membership fees and financial investments from Member States as its main means of income (URL4, URL5, Calcara, 2022).

INTERPOL's membership has been growing steadily since its creation. The 20 founding members in 1923 grew to 50 in 1955 and 150 in 1989. Changes in the membership of nations, such as the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, have also led to new members joining. Member States can be found

9 The INTERPOL General Secretariat has been based in France since 1946, first in Paris, then in Saint Cloud from 1966 to 1989, before moving to its current headquarters in Lyon in 1989.

on all continents. Recognising the importance of sharing information and expertise at regional level, INTERPOL organised its first regional conference in Liberia in 1963. Countries in the same region often face similar criminal threats and problems, and the work of the Secretariat is supported by regional offices in seven countries (Thailand, Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Kenya, El Salvador, Cameroon) ([URL5](#), [Gerspacher, 2008](#)).

The working languages of the Organisation were French and English in the early days, Spanish was introduced in 1955 and Arabic was adopted as the fourth official language in 1999. Today, official documents are translated into all four languages and interpretation is provided for major conferences and meetings ([URL5](#)).

Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, as an important step in counter-terrorism ([Pizzato, 2019](#); [Calcara, 2020](#)), INTERPOL established the Command and Coordination Centre (CCC), which serves as a contact point for all Member States that require urgent police information or are in a crisis situation. Since 2003, multilingual staff has been on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In 2011, a second CCC Operations Centre was opened in the Buenos Aires regional office, and in 2015, a third in Singapore.

On 6 December 2005, the first INTERPOL and UN Security Council Special Wanted List was published, combining the UN sanctions regime and INTERPOL's well-established Wanted List system as an effective law enforcement tool. Its main function is to inform national law enforcement authorities of the sanctions imposed by the UNSC (asset freezes, travel bans, arms embargoes) against designated persons and entities.

Since 2007, the importance of police training has been defined as a core function of the Organisation.

A set of seven Global Policing Goals was adopted in 2018, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflecting INTERPOL's priorities to address the crime and terrorism threats:

Goal 1: Counter the threat of terrorism;

Goal 2: Promote border integrity worldwide;

Goal 3: Protect vulnerable communities;

Goal 4: Secure cyberspace for people and businesses;

Goal 5: Promote global integrity;

Goal 6: Curb illicit markets;

Goal 7: Support environmental security and sustainability ([URL6](#)).

International financial crime, which has grown exponentially in recent years, is undermining global financial systems, hampering economic growth and causing

huge losses to businesses and individuals worldwide. As a result of a coordinated international response, the Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Centre (IFCACC) became operational in 2022 ([URL5](#)).

Technological Progress

The development of the technical tools available to INTERPOL is summarised in the table below.

Table 1
Development of INTERPOL's technological tools

Year	Tool, description
1923.	The first wanted notices appear in the ICPC's international public security journal.
1930s	In addition to specialised departments for counterfeiting currency and passports, a comprehensive criminal registry system will be set up, which will include the names of criminals, identity and vehicle registration document details, as well as details of their offences classified by type and location. This will be supplemented by specialised fingerprint and photo records. (The data will initially be compiled and analysed manually.)
Since 1935	The ICPC's international radio network is set up, providing for the first time an independent telecommunications system for national criminal police authorities.
1946.	A colour-coded system of warrants called 'international notice' is established. Initially, there were five types of notices (red, blue, green, yellow and black – internationally wanted criminals, information relating to investigations, threats to public safety, missing persons and unidentified bodies).
2000.	An Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is to be introduced, which will significantly reduce the time needed for fingerprint checks.
2001.	An International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database will be created. Using image and video comparison software, expert investigators will be able to instantly identify links between victims, abusers and locations (2017 was the 10,000th identification, a milestone.)
2002.	The secure global police communication system known as I-24/7 is launched. It forms the core of all INTERPOL secure communications.
2002.	A database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) will be created to help Member States secure their borders and combat terrorists and other dangerous criminals travelling with false identity documents.
2002.	An INTERPOL DNA database is set up, which is used to detect crime, identify victims of disasters and locate missing persons.
2005.	For the first time, the INTERPOL and UN Security Council special (light blue) circular on groups and individuals subject to UN sanctions, mentioned above, is issued.
2011.	The first Purple Notice (method of committing offences) is issued.
2016.	A facial recognition system using an automated biometric software application will become operational, effectively complementing existing expertise and tools in fingerprint and DNA testing.

Note. Edited by the authors, based on INTERPOL ([URL5](#)).

Summary

Although the world has changed a lot in the last century, many of the ICPC's goals and tools from 1923 are still the basis of our collaborations today.

Direct contact used to be provided by central contact points, but now it is provided by national offices 24 hours a day. The main areas of cooperation are cross-border investigations, operations and arrests, sharing vital police information on a daily basis, and exchanging experience between police officers and experts ([URL7](#)).

Communication technology has developed enormously over the last century. In 1923, it would have been difficult to imagine the extent of the change that would occur in this field. In 1935, the first international radio network providing an independent telecommunications system for national criminal police authorities was a major achievement. Today, police forces around the world communicate via I-24/7, a web-based police communications system that gives national bureaus real-time access to a wide range of databases.

In 1923, the eighth regulation of the International Police Congress encouraged participating countries to use the fingerprint identification techniques developed by the Danish police and to create an international register. Today, the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), the DNA database and the facial recognition system allow thousands of identifications to be made per year. The criminal databases, which contain millions of records, include information on the names of criminals, stolen travel documents, stolen objects of virtue and vehicles, firearms, biometric data, images of child sexual abuse, etc. The response time for a query is less than one second!

The swift transmission of extradition requests has been a priority from the very beginning, as well as their use as a basis for pre-trial detention. Currently, thousands of electronic red notices are issued annually through secure police channels for the arrest, extradition or other similar action of wanted persons ([URL7](#)).

On 16 December 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a decision to establish an International Day of Police Cooperation in recognition of the vital work of law enforcement agencies around the world. Every year, on 7 September, the founding of INTERPOL's predecessor, the ICPC, in 1923, will be commemorated ([URL8](#)).

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The INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore: A Personal Retrospective



Thomas Herko

Liaison Officer
Federal Ministry of the Interior
Austrian Embassy Budapest
thomas.herko@bmi.gv.at



Abstract

Aim: The article introduces the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore. It provides a survey of the facility's genesis and development portraying the ambitious original vision for the IGCI to become firstly, a second headquarter for the INTERPOL General Secretariat (IGS), secondly, a cutting-edge research and development facility for police worldwide, and thirdly, an Asian hub for international police cooperation.

Methodology: The author has used open sources supplemented by personal memories and insights of both former and current executive staff of the IGS.

Findings: As the original vision for the IGCI has not been accomplished to date, three key factors are identified as crucial for its realisation: agreement, funding, as well as commitment.

Value: The article assesses the added value of the IGCI for international police cooperation as well as its future potential.

Keywords: INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation Singapore, Cyber-crime, digital security and operational support, Capacity building and training, Police innovation

My First Visit to Singapore

In early 1990, when I was a student at Vienna University, I visited Southeast Asia and Singapore for the first time. I remember how overwhelmed I was by

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the tropical climate with both high temperatures and humidity, the paradisiac flora in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the buzzing Orchard Road full of huge modern shopping malls with everything one can buy, the coastline seafood restaurants promoting the national dish ‘chili crab’, the highly developed infrastructure, as well as the super clean cars on the roads. Overall, apart from the sometimes-unbearable heat – which made me appreciate air conditioning – quite positive impressions. How should I have known that I would get the chance to live and work around the corner of the splendid Singapore Botanic Gardens 24 years later?

INTERPOL Looking for More Space

The International Criminal Police Organization, in short INTERPOL, with 195 member countries is the largest international police organisation. Basically, it is a global platform for the membership’s law enforcement agencies to share and access data on crimes and criminals, as well as to provide a range of technical and operational support following its mission statement ‘*Connecting police for a safer world*’. Under the supervision of the Executive Committee, whose members are elected by the General Assembly – INTERPOL’s governing body in which each member country has one vote – the IGS coordinates the organisation’s day-to-day activities to fight a range of crimes, among other things by managing 19 databases. Today the IGS comprises a headquarter in France (from 1946 in Paris, since 1989 in Lyon), a facility in Singapore and several satellite offices¹ in different regions.

The facility in Singapore – the centre of INTERPOL’s activities in cyber-crime, research and development, and capacity building also providing an Asian base for several crime areas ([URL1](#)) – exists since 2015. It complements the headquarter in Lyon and enhances the Organisation’s presence in Asia. However, there is a story behind INTERPOL’s expansion to Southeast Asia and the genesis of the IGCI, in fact the path to Singapore started in France in the first decade of the new millennium.

After its foundation in Vienna in 1923 and its reestablishment in 1946 INTERPOL’s membership had steadily grown and the IGS continuously delivered and modernised its tools and services for the member countries without

¹ These are in Argentina (Buenos Aires), Austria (Vienna), Barbados (Bridgetown), Belgium (Brussels), Cameroon (Yaoundé), Côte d’Ivoire (Abidjan), El Salvador (San Salvador), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), Kenya (Nairobi), The Netherlands (The Hague), USA (New York), as well as Zimbabwe (Harare).

much attention by the public. This changed with the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. They mark a turning point for the organisation making it operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as developing '*a more reactive, relevant and operational function, to better assist police in its member countries in times of crisis*' (URL2).

The increasing demands for IGS services resulted in the need for more staff and space. From 2003, additional premises next to the headquarter in Lyon had to be rented at high cost. The need grew year by year and more additional space had to be rented. As the fundraising for the extension of the headquarter in Lyon was not successful – as a matter of fact, due to police budget constraints an increase of the mandatory statutory contributions of member countries was out of question – the IGS opened consultations with several member countries to find an alternative solution. Finally, Singapore offered to fully fund the creation of a new INTERPOL hub with a state-of-the-art building in a prime location in the island state.

Singapore's offer to establish a second headquarter in Asia was gladly welcome by the IGS and seemed to bring about a win-win situation for both sides. On the one side, INTERPOL would both strategically and operationally strengthen its global infrastructure with a new facility in the Asia and Pacific region as well as answer the growing demand for space in Lyon. Establishing a permanent presence in the region would consider that the global centre of gravity – from a demographic, economic and decisional point of view – was shifting more and more rapidly towards Asia and Pacific, while at the same time the region still had significant potential for development in international police cooperation. The new facility, however, would also expand the scope of cooperation to other increasingly complex (technology-based) crime challenges such as cybercrime.

On the other side, Singapore had a high interest in strategic terms to bring INTERPOL in and establish an innovation hub for law enforcement worldwide. This because it was already a global hub for both the security industry as well as research institutions with an outstandingly developed high-tech infrastructure in place. The additional hub would further enhance Singapore's perception as a dynamic country with a strong culture of innovation. The win-win situation for both sides became a vision by the end of the 2000s.

In 2010, the Executive Committee discussed and finally unanimously endorsed the proposal for the creation of the IGCI in Singapore. It highlighted that the new facility would '*complement and support*' the IGS in Lyon which would '*remain the organisation's world headquarters*'. The key elements would include innovative research and development to enhance forensics and database capabilities, particularly in the identification of crimes and criminals, technology

and innovation-based police training and capacity building, as well as enhanced capacity to provide 24/7 operational support to police across time zones and distances with greater mobility (URL3).

To conclude, the vision for the IGCI was to become a second headquarter for the IGS, a cutting-edge research and development facility for police worldwide, as well as an Asian hub for international police cooperation.

A New INTERPOL Facility in Singapore

In November 2010, the General Assembly in Doha, Qatar, adopted resolution AG-2010-RES-08 calling for the establishment of the IGCI in Singapore (URL4). The resolution highlights the *'need for all of our member countries to benefit from cutting edge research and development on the identification of crimes and criminals, innovation-based capacity building and provision of 24/7 operational police support to strengthen policing worldwide to better deal with future challenges'* but also the importance *'for the Organisation to be able to continue to evolve without increasing mandatory statutory contributions of member countries'*. The General Assembly made a clear point on the commitment that the funding for the establishment of the new facility would not result in any increase of the member countries' mandatory statutory contributions. Finally, the resolution authorised the signing of the Agreement between INTERPOL and the Government of the Republic of Singapore regarding the establishment of the IGCI in Singapore – the Headquarters Agreement on which both sides agreed within a short period of time.

The IGCI Working Group

In accordance with resolution AG-2010-RES-08 a working group (IGCI WG) was established in which member country representatives were invited to participate in the process of the IGCI creation and provide necessary input. The IGCI WG held several meetings during the period 2011–2014. It presented progress reports with recommendations to the Executive Committee in work areas of the IGCI in 2012 and 2013 as well as a full report with recommendations which was endorsed by the General Assembly in Monaco in 2014. Furthermore, cybercrime was added to INTERPOL's strategic framework.

Within the IGCI WG the Operational Expert Group on Cybercrime supported the further development of the INTERPOL Digital Crime Centre, one of the key features of the new facility. As a result, the General Assembly in Monaco

adopted resolution AG-2014-RES-04 on the creation of the INTERPOL Global Cybercrime Expert Group ([URL5](#)).

The Establishment of the IGCI

In September 2012, the IGS set up the Transition Support Office (TSO) in Singapore to push forward the establishment of the IGCI. The mandate of the TSO focused on the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement between INTERPOL and Singapore, as well as on the coordination of the IGCI building construction.

As for the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement, it turned out soon that there were different conceptions on both sides regarding the legal implications of the Agreement's provisions. However, to meet INTERPOL standards the implementation of certain articles of the agreement would have even required amendments to Singapore's legal framework which was difficult to achieve. In fact, INTERPOL was the first inter-governmental organisation to have a headquarters agreement with Singapore. Hence, this was a challenging process for both sides with a few issues remaining unsolved.

The construction of the IGCI building in a prime location opposite the US Embassy around the corner of the Singapore Botanic Gardens started in January 2013. From the beginning, the TSO coordinated the alignment of INTERPOL demands in terms of technical infrastructure, security features and interior design with Singapore's construction project. To fulfil the IGS requirements, initial funds allocated to the project from Singapore were not sufficient. In the end, the budget was topped up by INTERPOL, certain expectations of the IGS were downgraded and certain features in the building such as the IT infrastructure were co-funded by public-private partnerships.

The lessons learned of the experience both with the Headquarters Agreement as well as the building construction can be summed up that time, communication, and consequently agreement between INTERPOL and Singapore on all details – including the funding – were crucial from the very beginning of the project and even in the project conception phase. At any rate, things had to continue to run their course.

The IGCI Opening and its Main Features

In September 2014, Singapore officially handed the IGCI building over to the IGS. Finally, the TSO – which had grown from 3 to 30 staff between 2012 and

2014 – was able to move into the new premises. Remarkably, the building had received the Green Mark Platinum Award thanks to conforming to the highest environmental standards ([URL6](#)).

In April 2015, the IGCI was officially inaugurated in the presence of several ministers of member countries from different regions. Described as a cutting-edge research and development facility for the identification of crimes and criminals, innovative training, operational support, and partnerships, the IGCI – as one of four Executive Directorates within the IGS – set out to deliver:

- Support in cybercrime investigations as well as digital forensics;
- Strategic trend analyses in innovation, research, and digital security;
- Police capacity building and training;
- Operational support with global outreach around the clock; as well as
- Partnerships with the private sector and academia to the benefit of law enforcement.

The IGCI's state-of-the-art facilities such as the Cyber Fusion Centre, the Cyber Research and Innovation Centre, and the Digital Forensics Laboratory were designed to support the member countries with cybercrime investigations and to enhance cybersecurity capabilities. The Cyber Fusion Centre coordinates and supports international operations against cybercriminals. It assists member countries in tracking down cybercriminals and cybercrime networks operating across borders through real-time monitoring and threat analysis. The Cyber Research and Innovation Centre conducts research and development activities to identify technological advancements and evolving cyber threats. The Digital Forensics Laboratory provides specific forensic support and assists with building national digital forensics capacity.

As for police capacity building and training, the IGCI offers training programmes and capacity-building initiatives to law enforcement personnel from around the world. These programmes aim to enhance their knowledge and skills in dealing with cybercrime and cyber threats. The IGCI premises have numerous training spaces and meeting rooms. From the beginning, trainings were delivered related to new urgent crime challenges such as cryptocurrencies, darknet, and malware.

As for operational support, a third Command and Coordination Centre (CCC) in addition to the first one in Lyon (from 2003) and the second one in Buenos Aires (from 2011) was set up in Singapore's IGCI in 2015. This to provide real-time support in multiple languages for any member country requiring urgent assistance ([URL7](#)). The CCC in Singapore completed the project called '*Follow the sun*' in service delivery, as with the 3 CCCs operating only day shifts

must be provided. The CCC is also supporting member countries with its teams deployed for INTERPOL Major Events such as the FIFA World Cup 2022 (Qatar), the G7 2023 (Japan) or the Singapore Formula 1 Grand Prix as well as with Incident Response Teams in case of sudden major terrorist attacks or natural/transportation disasters with multination's casualties.

FIFA and the IGCI

In June 2015, INTERPOL announced the suspension of its agreement with FIFA following investigations into corruption ([URL8](#)). This concluded an agreement of 2011 by which INTERPOL had received a donation from FIFA worth 20 million Euros to create an Integrity in Sport programme – with a specific focus on the fight against match-fixing – for a period of 10 years. Subsequently, INTERPOL returned 2.9 million Euros which remained unspent from the donation. The decision had a direct impact on the IGCI as basically a whole floor of its building was dedicated to the Integrity in Sport programme within the Capacity Building and Training Directorate. Consequently, due to lack of financial resources the contracts of several staff had to be terminated. This was a setback for the IGCI just two months after its inauguration.

The Further Development of the IGCI

The experience with FIFA was also a setback for INTERPOL's general policy related to partnerships with public and private entities and has contributed to a more prudent approach. This resulted in the development of a transparent due diligence framework defining the criteria for becoming an INTERPOL partner, particularly strict when external funding was involved ([URL9](#)).

The original vision for the IGCI was to become a global platform for networking and information exchange between actors confronted with security challenges and actors developing innovative solutions for such challenges. For this purpose, there was even the concept of a permanent showcase in the IGCI ground floor which could not be realised due to several obstacles.

Beyond the IGCI premises, however, there was a concept which could materialise: INTERPOL World, an event owned by INTERPOL but organised by an external agency in Singapore. It combined a congress with an expo aiming at creating a platform for the security industry, law enforcement and government agencies to develop closer partnerships and innovative security initiatives.

The first edition took place in April 2015 – in the margins of the IGCI inauguration – and brought together more than 8,000 participants, 200 companies from 30 countries and law enforcement from across the globe. The Congress focused on 4 emerging security challenges: border management, cybercrime, safe cities, and supply chain management ([URL10](#)). A second and a third edition of INTERPOL World were conducted in 2017 ([URL11](#)) and 2019 ([URL12](#)).

The IGCI as a Conference Venue

Since its opening in 2015, the IGCI has hosted several conferences and meetings. Just to name a few: the Europol-INTERPOL Cybercrime Conference (2016, 2018), a unique Regional Police Organizations gathering (2016), an Additional Session of the Executive Committee (2022), the INTERPOL Digital Security Challenge (2016), the INTERPOL Data Protection Officer Conference (2023), as well as various expert meetings related to topics such as disaster victim identification, child sexual abuse, leadership for women in law enforcement, or major event security. Furthermore, the IGCI organised the 18th Heads of NCB² Conference and the Police Science Congress at a huge conference centre in Singapore in June 2023.

My Secondment to Singapore

In early 2011, my story with INTERPOL began when I was appointed as new head of the INTERPOL Bureau in Austria's Criminal Intelligence Service (NCB Vienna). I assumed responsibility for the strategic, organisational, legal as well as administrative coordination of my country's membership in INTERPOL. For the following 3 ½ years, I represented Austria in various bodies and conferences related to international police cooperation, among others in the IGCI WG from 2011 to 2014.

As host and founding country of INTERPOL in 1923, Austria has always demonstrated its commitment to the cooperation in the organisation's framework. In this light, Austria was also willing to contribute resources to the historic establishment of the new facility in Singapore. It materialised in the secondment of a national expert. Subsequently, I was encouraged to apply for a senior

2 NCB stands for National Central Bureau, the single point of contact in each INTERPOL member country.

position, and after a successful application procedure, I was recruited as Assistant Director for Strategic Partnerships for the secondment period 2014–2017. In this function, I developed an external relations network of INTERPOL's new presence in Asia which included outreach to the diplomatic community, international organisations, the security industry, and the research community. This to identify potential areas of cooperation in the fight against high-tech enabled crime such as cybercrime as well as in the promotion of innovative solutions for police. Furthermore, I aligned the compatibility of the INTERPOL World editions in 2015 and 2017 with INTERPOL's public image in close cooperation with the event organising agency. Finally, I was also enabled to provide advice to the IGS on issues related to strategy, ethics and due diligence as well as to support the IGCI Executive Office with the admission procedures of senior personnel seconded by member countries.

In retrospect, my 3 years at the IGCI have allowed me to gain very good insights into both the inner workings and the management of the organisation.

Vision and Reality

At the very beginning, the vision for the IGCI was to become a second headquarter for the IGS, a cutting-edge research and development facility for police worldwide, as well as an Asian hub for international police cooperation. Has this vision turned into reality?

I would say, although considerable progress has been made, the full realisation of the original vision still lies in the future. Today, the IGCI comprises around 125 staff (out of more than 1,000 staff of the IGS in total) from 45 member countries. In 2019, the Executive Directorate IGCI was replaced by the new Executive Directorate for Technology and Innovation, the units in IGCI were fragmented between Lyon and Singapore. Hence, overall INTERPOL's centre of gravity is definitely still in Lyon. To realise the original vision, INTERPOL's member countries would have to encourage the implementation of 3 key factors: a profound agreement on the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between INTERPOL and Singapore, sufficient financial resources to guarantee that the IGCI meets all demands of the membership, and a clear commitment of the organisation that Asia should become INTERPOL's second epicentre next to Europe.

As of 2023, a lot has been achieved with the IGCI in Singapore of which INTERPOL can be proud of. This applies especially to the delivery of cyber- and innovation-related services as well as to the boost for the international

police cooperation in the Asia and Pacific region. Nonetheless, the IGCI's full potential is yet to be seen.

My Last Visit to Singapore

After 1990, I visited Singapore again in 2012. Several breathtaking architectural changes had created a new Singapore skyline with skyscrapers such as the iconic Marina Bay Sands resort. Even after my secondment I used to visit Singapore once per year... After the travel restrictions due to the Covid pandemic had been lifted I was able to return over the Easter weekend 2023. Although I had only a layover of less than 48 hours, I managed to walk through my beloved magnificent Singapore Botanic Gardens as well as to pass by the IGCI building. I could see that facade renovation works were ongoing, 9 years after the construction completion, a fact owed to the climatic conditions in this part of the world. The surrounding area being as neat as before the most striking change was the brand new MRT station 'Napier' just a few steps from the IGCI's entrance gate. MRT stands for Mass Rapid Transit system and is Singapore's principal mode of railway transportation. The number of cars on the island is limited and most people use the MRT, buses or taxis to move around. It's overwhelming to see how fast Singapore has continuously been extending the MRT network to the convenience of the people. One of many examples for the island state performing well when it comes to eco-friendly development as well as smart solutions. Singapore is and remains a fascinating place, a peaceful multi-ethnic society with a high standard of living, a welcoming country for expats, a police-friendly environment, and finally a high-tech laboratory for the future – a future with the IGCI as a flagship for international police cooperation in the fight against 21st century crime waiting to realise its full potential.

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URL1: *General Secretariat*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/General-Secretariat>

URL2: *Interpol 100 – Key Dates*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/INTERPOL-100/Key-dates>

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The Benefits of Using INTERPOL's Criminal Databases – The Hungarian Perspective



Péter Kóvári

Dr, Deputy Director,
police colonel
International Law Enforcement
Cooperation Centre
kovarip@nebek.police.hu

Abstract

Aim: The aim of this article is to give an overview of the benefits of INTERPOL's databases and to present the related Hungarian experiences. The article was written for the centenary celebration of INTERPOL.

Methodology: The article is based on the relevant professional literature, statistics and the author's professional experience.

Findings: The INTERPOL serves as a vital partner in Hungary's efforts to combat crime, ensure public safety, and protect national security.

Value: The article serves as an explanation of worldwide used law enforcement products and gives unique picture on a national practice.

Keywords: INTERPOL, databases, International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre

Introduction

The dawn of the 21st century has ushered in an era of unprecedented interconnectivity and globalisation. As borders blur and information traverses the globe in milliseconds, so do criminal activities that exploit this interconnectedness. In this dynamic landscape, the need for international collaboration to combat transnational crime has become utmost important. This is where INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, emerges as a pivotal player, demonstrating the remarkable potential of united efforts in maintaining global security, justice, and harmonious international relations.

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INTERPOL's mission revolves around fostering international cooperation to combat a wide range of cross-border crimes, including human trafficking, drug smuggling, cybercrime, terrorism, and organised crime. Established in 1923, INTERPOL has evolved from its early origins into a sophisticated and efficient organisation that bridges the gaps between nations and law enforcement agencies. Its primary objective is to facilitate information exchange, coordination, and collaboration among its 195 Member States, each contributing unique insights, resources, and expertise to a collective effort ([URL1](#), [URL2](#)).

INTERPOL's origins can be traced back to the early 20th century when its initial focus was on facilitating communication and collaboration among police forces from different nations. However, it wasn't until after World War II that INTERPOL truly began to expand its scope and impact. The post-war era brought about significant shifts in the global landscape, including the rise of transnational crime and the need for coordinated international responses. As criminal activities increasingly transcended national borders, the limitations of traditional law enforcement mechanisms became evident. INTERPOL recognised the need to evolve beyond its original function and adapt to these changing dynamics. In the latter half of the 20th century, INTERPOL underwent a transformation from a primarily European-focused organisation to a truly global network. With the expansion of its membership to countries from around the world, INTERPOL's mission and role broadened substantially. This evolution was driven by the recognition that criminal enterprises were no longer confined within national boundaries. The dawn of the digital age presented both challenges and opportunities for the organisation. As criminal activities began to exploit the global connectivity facilitated by technology, INTERPOL recognised the need for advanced tools to counteract these threats. This marked a turning point in the organisation's history, prompting it to invest heavily in cutting-edge technologies, databases, and communication systems. The expansion of its membership brought together law enforcement agencies from diverse legal systems, cultures, and languages. This diversity became a strength as it fostered a culture of collaboration and mutual support. INTERPOL's partnerships extended beyond law enforcement agencies to include international organisations, governments, and private sector entities, amplifying its reach and impact ([URL1](#)).

The complexities of modern crime extend beyond the capabilities of individual nations to address effectively. Criminal networks operate across borders, exploiting jurisdictional limitations to evade justice. This necessitates a cohesive global response that transcends national boundaries. International cooperation is not merely advantageous; it has become an imperative for maintaining the

rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and ensuring the safety and security of citizens worldwide.

INTERPOL fills a critical gap in international law enforcement. It functions as an intermediary, a facilitator, and a catalyst for collaboration. Unlike any other organisation, INTERPOL provides a platform where countries, irrespective of their political affiliations, can engage in dialogue, share intelligence, and coordinate operations. The organisation's neutrality and commitment to justice and human rights make it a trusted partner for countries with divergent ideologies.

INTERPOL's efforts in tackling transnational crime transcend geopolitical rivalries, facilitating dialogue and understanding among Member States. Through shared training programmes, joint operations, and information exchange, law enforcement agencies learn to work together effectively. This cooperation extends beyond individual cases, contributing to a more secure global environment and reducing the potential for conflict.

The main objective of the organisation is to assist law enforcement agencies from different countries in tackling international crime and maintaining global security. INTERPOL achieves its goals through various means, including the use of sophisticated databases and communication networks that enable information sharing and collaboration among member countries ([URL3](#)).

INTERPOL's Communication Network

INTERPOL's communication network is a vital component of its operations, enabling Member States to collaborate effectively on various law enforcement matters. The organisation utilises a range of technological solutions to facilitate communication and information sharing among its Member States. The I-24/7 Secure Global Police Communications System not only provides access to INTERPOL's databases but also allows law enforcement agencies to communicate securely with each other. It supports quick messaging, information exchange, and coordination on cross-border cases ([URL3](#)).

The I-24/7 system stands as a testament to INTERPOL's commitment to real-time collaboration. This advanced communication platform provides authorised law enforcement agencies with unparalleled access to the databases and secure channels for information exchange. Operating 24/7, it ensures that law enforcement officers have instantaneous access to critical information regardless of time zones or geographical distances. This real-time access empowers officers on the field to make informed decisions, apprehend suspects, and solve cases more efficiently.

The system's secure communication channels allow for instantaneous exchange of information, evidence, and updates among Member States. Officers can communicate directly, ensuring that vital details are shared seamlessly without compromising data security. This system has proven instrumental in breaking down barriers that traditionally hindered international cooperation, allowing law enforcement agencies to respond swiftly to emerging threats and criminal activities.

The I-24/7 system boasts a range of features that enhance its effectiveness in combating crime:

- Real-time access to databases. One of the system's standout features is its direct link to INTERPOL's comprehensive databases. Law enforcement officers can query and retrieve information related to criminals, stolen property, and criminal activities in real time, enhancing their ability to identify and track down criminals, and detect cases.
- Secure communication. In the digital age, secure communication is paramount. The I-24/7 system employs state-of-the-art encryption and security protocols, ensuring that sensitive information remains confidential and protected from unauthorised access.
- Instant messaging. The system facilitates instant messaging between law enforcement agencies. This streamlined communication fosters collaboration and allows for quick exchanges of information, updates on ongoing operations, and coordination of efforts.
- Coordination in cross-border cases. With the I-24/7 system, law enforcement agencies can collaborate seamlessly on cases that span multiple jurisdictions. The communication network erases the obstacles that once hindered effective international cooperation.
- Real-world impact. The successes facilitated by the I-24/7 system range from capturing high-profile criminals to preventing terrorist acts and recovering stolen property. These real-world outcomes underscore the tangible benefits of INTERPOL's communication network.

This communication network has redefined global cooperation in law enforcement. By providing a secure and efficient platform for information exchange, the organisation empowers law enforcement agencies across the world to collaborate effectively, transcend borders, and combat crime collectively.

INTERPOL's Databases

INTERPOL's databases serve as a powerful arsenal against crime. The organisation maintains a comprehensive set of databases containing crucial information about criminals, weapons, travel and identity documents, forensics, stolen property and criminal activities. These 19 databases containing almost 130 million records provide law enforcement agencies worldwide with real-time access to critical information ([URL4](#)).

INTERPOL's Nominal database is an integral component of the organisation's mission to facilitate international police cooperation. It functions as a centralised repository that houses data on a wide range of individuals, including suspects, fugitives, missing persons, and even witnesses of crime. This includes personal details, photographs and biographical data. The database can also hold information about criminal history, known associates, and modus operandi. Perhaps one of the most prominent features associated with the Nominal Database is the notice system. INTERPOL's colour-coded notices are categorised based on the type of information they convey and the objectives they serve. The most widely recognised of them is the red notice. It is a request to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition and are issued for fugitives who are wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence for a serious crime. Other colour-coded notices are issued among others to collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities concerning a crime; to help locate missing persons; to provide warnings and criminal intelligence; to seek information on unidentified bodies or to provide information on new methods used by criminals. The database has played a key role in the successful capture and extradition of countless fugitives. By providing law enforcement agencies with accurate and up-to-date information, it increases the likelihood of locating and bringing criminals to justice. Beyond apprehending criminals, the Nominal Database also aids in locating missing persons. It serves as a valuable resource for reuniting families and providing closure in cases of disappearances. Member States continually contribute to and access this repository, ensuring that its contents are up-to-date and useful ([URL5](#)).

Picture 1
INTERPOL Notices



Note. URL5.

The Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database (SLTD) was born out of the growing recognition of the need to address the misuse of travel documents for criminal purposes, including illegal immigration, human trafficking, drug smuggling and terrorism. INTERPOL, in collaboration with its Member States, embarked on the mission to create a centralised database that would contain detailed information about stolen and lost travel documents. The goal was to enable law enforcement agencies and border control authorities worldwide to quickly identify fraudulent or compromised travel documents. The database houses information on stolen, lost, revoked, or invalidated travel documents, including passports and identity cards. Each record typically includes details such as document numbers, issuing authorities, and type of document. Law enforcement agencies, border control authorities and immigration officers from INTERPOL's Member States can access the database in real-time. This instant access enables them to verify the authenticity of travel documents presented at border crossings or during routine checks. The SLTD database's significance in enhancing global security is multifaceted and extends to various aspects of law enforcement and border control. By providing real-time access to information about stolen and lost travel documents, the database helps prevent individuals from using fraudulent documents to cross borders. This is a critical component in combating international terrorism or other forms of serious and cross-border crime. As the world continues to

face evolving security challenges, the SLTD database remains an essential tool in safeguarding international travel and protecting nations from potential threats. While the SLTD database is a powerful tool, it is not without its challenges. Ensuring that the database remains up-to-date and that member countries promptly report stolen and lost travel documents is an ongoing concern. Additionally, the database must continually evolve to keep pace with advancements in document forgery and identity theft techniques ([URL6](#)).

Officers performing first-line checks have few seconds to determine if a document is authentic or potentially forged. As a result, they must be aware of the warning indications. The Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS) provides clear visual information to police officers and border guards on the essential markers that can detect a counterfeit or forged document. It combines and upgrades INTERPOL's former Dial-Doc platform to make Frontex Quick Check Cards available to frontline border control personnel via INTERPOL's secure global police communications system, I-24/7. The Quick Check Card is a visual decision aid. It displays a sample of the document being inspected and underlines the essential security characteristics to inspect. The visuals are compiled by document experts based on risk assessments, known alarms, and the document's vulnerability assessment. Real-time access to FIELDS during frontline border checks will make checking the legitimacy of travel and identification papers faster and easier, with more accurate findings. The FIELDS system enhances INTERPOL's existing SLTD database by addressing counterfeits and forgeries ([URL7](#)).

The EDISON (Electronic Documentation and Information System on Investigation Networks) stores examples of genuine travel documents, in order to help identify fakes. It contains images, descriptions and security features of genuine travel and identity documents issued by countries and international organisations, perfectly completing SLTD and FIELDS. This collaborative approach ensures that criminals cannot easily exploit vulnerabilities in one country to enter another undetected ([URL4](#)).

Due to their ability to disclose connections between people as well as crime scenes, fingerprints, DNA profiling, and facial recognition can all be extremely helpful in the investigation of crimes. The effectiveness of science in resolving crimes that take place in several different countries is demonstrated by the INTERPOL's DNA database. With the use of this database, which combines DNA profiles from crime scenes, suspects and instances involving missing individuals, law enforcement agencies all around the world are given an exceptional tool for identification and crime resolution. Law enforcement agencies can identify links between crimes and possibly solve cold cases by comparing

DNA profiles from other cases. This database enables agencies to quickly determine if a suspect wanted in one country matches DNA evidence found in another. The database assists in identifying victims of human trafficking and locating missing persons. DNA analysis helps confirm identities, enabling the reconnection of families and bringing closure to unresolved cases. INTERPOL's DNA database facilitates international collaboration by providing a central repository where Member States can share and access DNA profiles, thereby aiding investigations that extend beyond national boundaries ([URL8](#)).

INTERPOL's Fingerprint database is another critical component in the fight against transnational crime. This database compiles fingerprint records from crime scenes, suspects and convicts, allowing law enforcement agencies to identify individuals linked to various criminal activities. The benefits of this database are substantial as fingerprints are unique to each individual, making them a powerful tool for positively identifying suspects and connect them to specific crime scenes. It allows for the comparison of fingerprints from unsolved cases with new evidence, potentially leading to breakthroughs in investigations that have remained stagnant for years. The database also aids border control agencies in identifying individuals attempting to use false identities or evade authorities ([URL9](#)).

The INTERPOL Facial Recognition System is a unique global database that relies on facial images received from most of the Member States and a combination of advanced biometric technologies to identify individuals of interest. Almost 1,500 terrorists, criminals, fugitives, or missing persons have been identified since the launch of the system ([URL10](#)).

Child sexual exploitation is a heinous crime that transcends borders, making it challenging for individual countries to combat it effectively. The International Child Sexual Exploitation database aggregates information from Member States, enabling law enforcement agencies to share intelligence and work collaboratively. This unified approach empowers authorities to track down offenders and rescue victims across jurisdictions. By facilitating the swift identification of offenders, the database prevents further victimisation and ensures that justice is served ([URL11](#)).

INTERPOL's databases exemplify the organisation's commitment to utilising advanced technologies for the betterment of global security and justice. These databases not only expedite investigations and identify criminals but also promote international collaboration among law enforcement agencies. Looking ahead, INTERPOL will likely continue to enhance its databases and communication network to keep pace with technological advancements and changing crime landscapes.

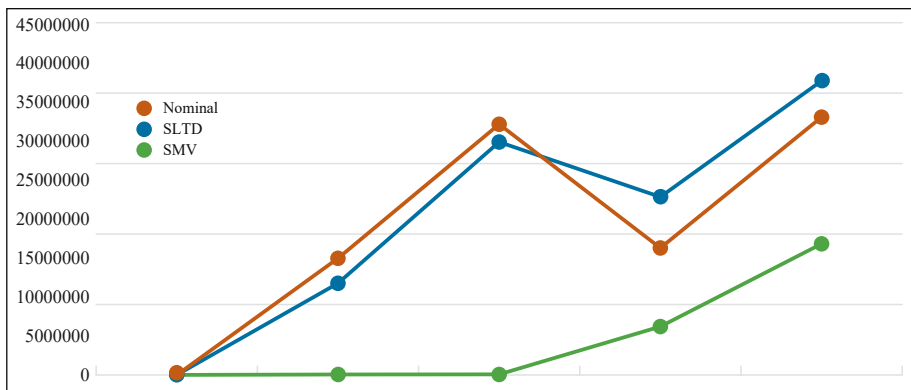
The Hungarian Approach

Hungary’s association with INTERPOL not only dates back to its inception in 1923, but our representatives also participated in the first International Criminal Police Congress, held in Monaco in April 1914. Hungary, recognising the importance of collaboration in combating crime, became one of the original 20 countries that signed the agreement establishing INTERPOL. Although our membership faded during the post war era, we officially became members again in 1981 (URL1).

Hungary is a landlocked country at the heart of Europe and this strategic geographic location makes it attractive to organised crime networks. The role of INTERPOL’s National Central Bureau (NCB) in Budapest is central to protecting national and regional security. The NCB is part of the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre (ILECC) which is the lead agency for international police cooperation involving Hungary (Mogyoródi, 2021). ILECC has always been keen on implementing new technical solutions offered by INTERPOL that increased the effectiveness of the fight against transnational crime.

With the FIND solution (Fixed INTERPOL Network Database) INTERPOL was offering countries the opportunity to give their front-line officers at borders instant access to its many databases. Hungary fully implemented this web-based solution in 2016, increasing the yearly number of searches from a few thousands to over 35 million in the nominal and stolen lost travel documents database, and over 6 million in the stolen motor vehicles database (SMV). These databases are widely accessible to authorised law enforcement personnel.

Diagram 1
Number of Searches between 2015 and 2022



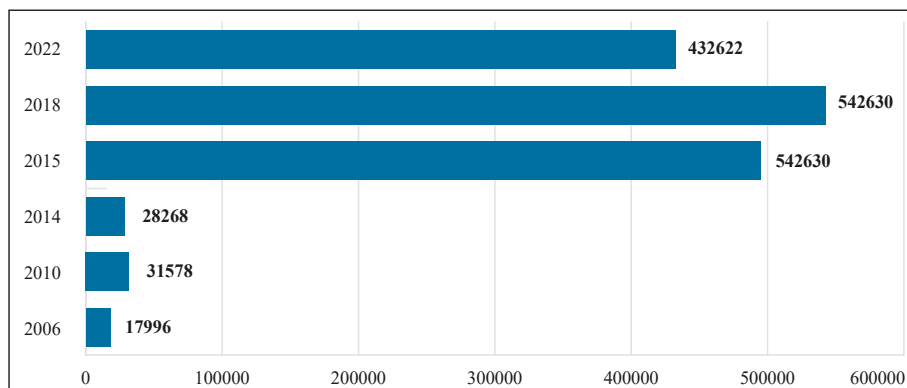
Note. Diagram made by the author, data from INTERPOL.

The COVID–19 epidemic in 2020 prevented most individuals from traveling, fewer checks were conducted (Mogyoródi, 2021). Implementing a systematic search regime resulted in more hits in INTERPOL’s databases, the arrest of more globally sought fugitives, and the detection of more stolen vehicles and documents. It contributes significantly to the public safety not only in Hungary but also in the region.

Data quality refers to the reliability, accuracy, completeness and consistency of data. It is a critical aspect of data management and plays a vital role in the success of any data-driven action. INTERPOL has been continuously working on improving the quality of its databases contents and developed Web INTERPOL Services Data Management (WISDM), a complete and up to date 24/7 tool which allow Member States to manage their data (insertion, update, deletion or visualisation) in SLTD and SMV databases. Hungary was among the first countries implementing this solution making high quality police information internationally available just seconds after the data being registered in our national database.

Diagram 2

Number of SLTD records

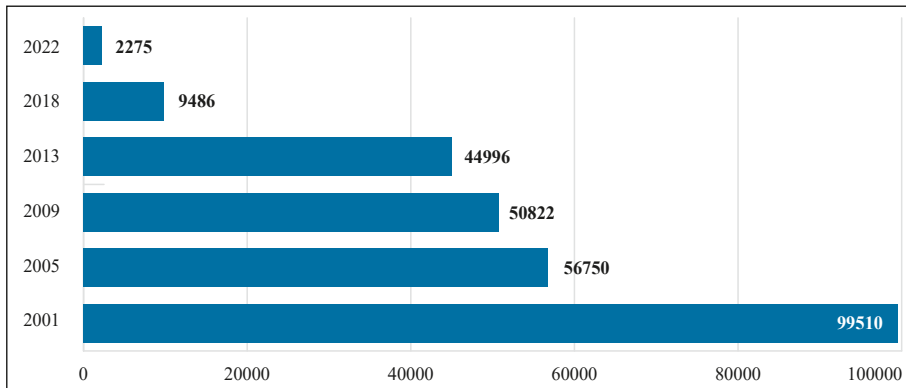


Note. Diagram made by the author, data from INTERPOL.

Using state-of-the-art data management tool resulted higher number and more accurate Hungarian data in SLTD. All types of travel and identity documents that are registered lost, stolen, stolen blank, revoked or invalid in the Hungarian database are immediately visible for the international law enforcement community.

Diagram 3

Number of SMV records



Note. Diagram made by the author, data from INTERPOL.

In the case of SMV higher data quality ended up less but more accurate data erasing the obsolete mass. Beside that lower numbers in vehicle crimes also contributed to a modest data quantity.

Hungarian law enforcement authorities and forensic institutions actively populate and query almost all criminal databases of INTERPOL.

Conclusion

INTERPOL is the global organisation that brings together law enforcement agencies from around the world to combat transnational crime and enhance international security. INTERPOL offers a multitude of advantages that contribute to its vital role in maintaining global peace and security. One of its most significant advantages is the ability to facilitate the sharing of critical information among the Member States. Law enforcement agencies in different countries can exchange intelligence, criminal profiles, and investigative leads swiftly and securely through INTERPOL's worldwide communication channel. INTERPOL maintains a comprehensive set of global databases. The databases are invaluable resources that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement work across the globe. In today's world, the threat of terrorism knows no boundaries. INTERPOL plays a crucial role in assisting Member States in countering terrorism. It provides a platform for sharing intelligence related to terrorist activities, identifying potential threats and coordinating efforts to prevent terrorist attacks. INTERPOL's

counterterrorism initiatives help Member States improve their security measures and protect their citizens from this global menace. INTERPOL offers specialised support in combating cyber threats. Member States benefit from INTERPOL's expertise in cybercrime investigations, capacity-building programmes, and access to a global network of cybersecurity professionals. This collaboration strengthens a country's ability to protect its digital infrastructure and combat cybercriminals effectively. INTERPOL delivers a wide range of training programmes and capacity-building initiatives designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of law enforcement officers. These programmes cover various aspects of crime prevention, investigation techniques, and the use of advanced technology. Member States can leverage INTERPOL's resources to ensure that their law enforcement personnel are well-prepared to tackle modern forms of crime effectively.

INTERPOL serves as a vital partner in Hungary's efforts to combat crime, ensure public safety, and protect national security. Through enhanced cross-border cooperation, access to a global database, support in counterterrorism and cybercrime mitigation, assistance in human trafficking investigations, and capacity-building initiatives, INTERPOL strengthens Hungary's ability to respond to a wide range of security challenges. As Hungary continues to work closely with INTERPOL, it can leverage the organisation's resources and expertise to create a safer and more secure environment for its citizens while contributing to global security efforts.

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URL1: *1923 – how our history started*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/INTERPOL-100/1923-how-our-history-started>

URL2: *Member countries*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/Member-countries>

URL3: *What is INTERPOL*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/What-is-INTERPOL>

URL4: *Our 19 databases*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Databases/Our-19-databases>

URL5: *About Notices*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Notices/About-Notices>

URL6: *SLTD database (travel and identity documents)*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Databases/SLTD-database-travel-and-identity-documents>

URL7: *FIELDS database*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Border-management/FIELDS-database>

URL8: *DNA*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Forensics/DNA>

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URL10: *Facial Recognition*. <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Forensics/Facial-Recognition>

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100 Years of INTERPOL: its Position and Role within the European Union



Peter De Buysscher

Director, first chief superintendent
International Police Cooperation of the
Belgian Federal Police
Vice-President
Europe on INTERPOL's Executive Committee
Chairperson
Management Board of Europol
peter.debuysscher@police.belgium.eu

Abstract

Despite INTERPOL's achievements through its global connection with and between all police forces, the current question is what place the largest international police organisation will take in police cooperation within the European Union. This question is indeed relevant given the European Union's increasing role in the regulation, policy and coordination in the field of European police cooperation. It has also become clear in recent years that the European Union has been striving for more strategic autonomy in this globalised world and more geopolitical independence. This has not only been the case in the areas of energy supply, climate and defence, but also in police cooperation. In my current positions as IINTERPOL Vice-President for Europe, but also as a person directly involved in European police cooperation (including through the chairmanship of the Europol Management Board and the chairmanship of COSI¹ during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2024), I think it would be interesting to reflect on that in this article.

Aim: Opinion on the future role of INTERPOL in the European Union.

Methodology: The various regulations and actions regarding police cooperation within the European Union are examined from the perspective of how INTERPOL relates to them.

Findings: Despite the various initiatives developed within the European Union to establish internal European police cooperation both through the European agency Europol and its various European information systems, it is clear that INTERPOL remains a vital enabler of European police cooperation.

1 Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security.



Value: In the light of the willingness from the European Union to more strategic autonomy, also regarding police and security, and given the ongoing negotiations between EU and INTERPOL, it is clear that consideration must be given to the role that INTERPOL can still play within the EU.

Keywords: INTERPOL, European Union, police cooperation, Europol

International Police Cooperation: From Useful to Necessary

In recent years, globalisation and cross-border crime have made cooperation with foreign police forces an increasingly important part of modern policing. The internationalisation of security issues has made it necessary for police forces to no longer regard international police cooperation as optional, but rather as a core task and a crucial factor in combating international crime and security phenomena.

The need for international police cooperation became even more apparent after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the successive terrorist attacks worldwide thereafter. In Europe, it also became clear that the issue of individuals from an EU Member State entering the Middle East conflict zone – with or without stolen or forged travel documents – and then returning to another EU Member State to commit attacks there, could only be tackled through intensive international police cooperation. Global geopolitical developments have brought about a migration wave, and it quickly became evident that EU Member States could not cope with what was soon considered a ‘migration crisis’ only through their sovereignty (or even only at EU level), especially when it emerged that there was even the slightest risk of foreign terrorist fighters mixing in the migration flows. Human smuggling associated with these migratory movements is also being organised internationally and has already resulted in numerous victims on different sea routes worldwide. The impact of internationally organised crime on our legal structures and economy has become even more apparent in recent years with the Sky ECC investigation, in which encrypted communication devices were decrypted and the extent of organised crime was clearly uncovered. The use in the virtual world of forms of communication that are barely detectable to the police, and the manifest rise of cybercrime in all its forms cause countries to reach their limits in their tackling of information and communications technology-related crime.

This does not mean that the need for international information exchange only became clear in recent decades. That would detract from the merits of the predecessors who initiated the creation of the International Criminal Police

Commission (ICPC) in 1923, renamed INTERPOL in 1956, the year the first Interpol Constitution was adopted. Overall, the evolution of INTERPOL, currently still the only police organisation connecting countries worldwide, has been running in parallel with the evolution of international police cooperation in global from ‘useful’ tool for law enforcement to necessary element in the fight against organised crime and terrorism.

The evolution of international crime has been reflected in the way INTERPOL has functioned over the years and in the aims the police organisation has pursued. In 1923 and in the first decades of its existence, cooperation was mainly focused on arrests and extraditions, forensic analysis of fingerprints and crime phenomena that still required the most attention at that time such as counterfeit money, false and stolen passports and forged cheques. Important symbolic dates in INTERPOL’s history illustrate how international police cooperation continued to develop and how the needs of police forces were met through various tools and services. The first international radio network in 1935 fulfilled the need for cross-border communication and the first Red Notice in 1967 the need for structured cooperation in the tracking of criminals and fugitives. Of course, the ever-growing globalisation called for increased possibilities for international information exchange. The launch of the I-24/7 communication system in 2002 is a perfect illustration of this.

The intensified need for international police cooperation in day-to-day police work has certainly been reflected in the rise in international information exchange. A thorough and transparent international information exchange is indispensable for tackling cross-border crime and terrorism and the start and end point of efficient international police cooperation. The statistics of my parent organisation, the Belgian Federal Police, have conclusively proven the growing importance of this. In 2012, the Belgian Police exchanged about 80,000 messages with foreign countries. In 2016, the year of the terrorist attacks in Brussels, this number had already increased to around 215,000 messages annually. With the constantly growing internationalisation of security issues, more than 500,000 international messages have been processed by the Belgian police in 2023 so far. This impressive surge is obviously linked to the fact that criminal and terrorist organisations have increasingly been cooperating internationally. The Sky ECC investigation identified criminal organisations by decrypting their communication assumed to be secret. This investigation aimed at destabilising criminal organisations mainly engaged in international drug trafficking, the laundering of criminal assets and infiltration into legal structures through active and passive corruption. This investigation alone led to a 25% increase in international information exchange in Belgium.

This ‘global communication connection’ through INTERPOL’s secure I-24/7 communication system, the Notices and Diffusions system, and automatic access to its 19 specialised databases is, in my view, precisely the core task of this organisation. If international information exchange is the start and end point of efficient international police cooperation, INTERPOL plays a key role in enabling this international exchange between the 195 Member States and through their National Central Bureaus (NCBs). Following the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2015 and 2016, most European countries were confronted with a first major increase in international information exchange. During this period, in addition to the Red Notices requesting the arrest of persons, Belgium entered no less than 1,600 Blue Notices and Diffusions with a view to locating persons linked to terrorism for further investigation and dismantling terrorist organisations. The integration of all this information into the INTERPOL databases combined with the battlefield information generated by active countries in the conflict zone formed the basis for a successful ‘Global Coalition against Daesh’ coordinated by INTERPOL. This proves that this organisation can respond to current trends and urgent needs of its Member States through its global connection.

From National Sovereignty to a Greater Role for the European Union in Police Cooperation

In the past, internal security policy and related laws and regulations were pre-eminently the responsibility of national governments. The extent to which a country, region or supranational partnership could call itself ‘sovereign’ was strongly connected with the extent to which it could determine its internal security itself. However, this national ‘security model’ came under increasing pressure towards the end of the 20th century due to the growing globalisation, as a result of which this exclusive national orientation proved no longer tenable.

Since the Maastricht Treaty in 1992,² EU Member States have transferred some of their powers in terms of internal security to the European Union through EU treaties. Besides the fact that Europe already had its own database for Schengen alerts (SIS II) and new SIS regulations optimising these alerts,³ Europol became a truly European agency financed by European funds. In addition, the ‘Swedish Framework Decision’⁴ was adopted laying down the principles according

2 Treaty on European Union.

3 Regulations EU 2018/1860, EU 2018/1861, EU 2018/1862.

4 Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA of 18 December 2006 on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union.

to which police information should be exchanged between EU Member States. Through this EU legislative initiative, the autonomous exchange of all available and accessible police information between the EU and the Schengen-associated countries was enabled and encouraged.

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty⁵ gave the European Union an even more prominent and policy-making role in cross-border police cooperation, with the European Commission as main legislative initiator.

With the Lisbon Treaty, the role of the EU Member States in police cooperation has partly become a receiver's role, or at least the EU regulations have become more binding on the Member States. These regulations often need to be not only transposed into national law but also implemented in the concrete police organisation and its day-to-day operation.

Because of all these regulatory and organisational initiatives at EU level, the European Union has increasingly been at the forefront of shaping and optimising European police cooperation. This was even more concretised by anchoring Europol's legal basis through the Europol Regulation.⁶ The agency has progressively evolved into the most important criminal information hub within the EU. Operational cooperation between Europol and the Member States has been further reinforced in recent years, and a raising amount of relevant information was received from the Member States. This led to the launch of coordinated joint investigations supported by Europol. Europol has become an ever more indispensable agency for European police forces in supporting cross-border investigations into serious and organised crime and terrorism.

So, not only were more information systems developed within the European Union in recent decades, but also, shortly after the terrorist attacks in Europe in 2015 and 2016, the need arose to interconnect all these existing systems and those yet to be created. The aim was to interconnect databases primarily used for border control, asylum and migration with those used for law enforcement. As a result, two EU regulations⁷ were adopted establishing a framework for the

5 Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

6 Regulation EU 2016/794 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for law enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

7 Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006.

Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU.

interoperability of EU information systems. This included the creation of a European search portal, the integration of a European Entry/Exit system to enhance the efficiency of border checks, and the implementation of ETIAS.⁸ The latter will allow advance security checks on visa-exempt nationals travelling to the Schengen area with a view to obtaining a travel authorisation.

Besides all these initiatives to promote the security of European citizens, it is becoming increasingly evident that the European institutions have been striving for more strategic autonomy on the geopolitical chessboard of this globalised world. The war in Ukraine has fuelled the sense of need for more autonomy in energy and defence, but this evolution cannot be ignored in the field of police cooperation either. The EU external policy on this cooperation has also manifested itself, for example, in the strategic and operational cooperation agreements that Europol has been concluding with third countries, systematically connecting them to the European secure communication channel SIENA.⁹ The recent EU directive on information exchange¹⁰ even recommends the use of SIENA as the ‘default channel’ to exchange police information.

INTERPOL’s Lasting Significant Influence within the European Union

The legitimate question therefore arises as to how INTERPOL will relate to all these initiatives developed within the European Union. What will be INTERPOL’s future role in line with the EU’s striving for greater strategic autonomy, including in the field of international police cooperation and police information management? How do Europol and INTERPOL relate to each other, and how can the INTERPOL databases and communication channels be integrated into this European structure?

Despite the various initiatives developed within the European Union to establish internal European police cooperation both through the European agency Europol and its various European information systems, it is clear to me that INTERPOL remains a vital enabler of European police cooperation.

Although the EU institutions and Member States have been developing a more autonomous form of European police cooperation as part of their strategic independence, INTERPOL still remains the only organisation that connects 195

8 European Travel Information and Authorisation System.

9 Secure Information Exchange Network Application.

10 Directive EU 2023/977 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of the Member States and repealing Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA.

countries worldwide and manages the only international database for alerts outside the Schengen area. It also has 19 historical and specialised databases of paramount importance (consulted no less than 16 million times a day worldwide), not least for protection of the European Union's external borders. For this protection, the possibility for every border post at EU's external borders to have direct access to INTERPOL's Nominal database and the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database is invaluable. The importance of the latter database should not be underestimated, as objective representations and threat analyses have very clearly shown that identity fraud is an important *modus operandi* for criminal and terrorist organisations to enter the European territory.

Consequently, it is necessary to integrate the INTERPOL databases SLTD¹¹ and TDAWN¹² in the implementation of the Interoperability Regulations of the European Union. Realising a 'one stop search' portal without integration of these databases would lead to duplication of work for police forces and border posts in particular. Moreover, for the security of the external borders, it would be appropriate for the EU to already support the Member States that do not yet have direct access to these databases.

Nevertheless, during the currently ongoing negotiations between the EU and INTERPOL – which will amend the existing cooperation agreement between Europol and INTERPOL and thus be crucial as a framework for the mutual exchange of personal data – data protection, ensured at European level by the Law Enforcement Directive,¹³ has often proved to be challenging. Here, we have noted a tension between the procedures of a global police organisation facilitating the cooperation in the spirit of sovereign Member States collaborating with each other based on trust, and the cooperation organised in a larger multilateral context such as the European Union. For example, in accordance with the ETIAS Regulation, a notification must not be sent to the country that owns the information if a hit is detected on the basis of that information. It is a duality between a trust-based cooperation between national sovereign Member States, and a philosophy of data protection that seeks to protect citizens from the violation of their privacy. In this regard, it will be necessary for INTERPOL, when reviewing its regulations on data processing, to take into account as much as possible the data protection principles globally pioneered by the European

11 Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database.

12 Travel Documents Associated with Notices database.

13 Directive EU 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, direction of prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data.

Union, and the understanding within the European Union that European data protection rules cannot be imposed so easily on other countries and continents. As for data protection, there is no equal level playing field worldwide.

A major point to consider as to INTERPOL's role in the European Union is its relationship with the European agency Europol, which has evolved into the main criminal information hub and operational support centre in our European region. How can both organisations be complementary and provide added value to police forces in the field and in their judicial investigations? It also goes without saying that a European agency relates differently to its mission within the law enforcement community than an intergovernmental organisation that primarily relies on its own constitution and rules of data processing. INTERPOL still operates from a philosophy of national sovereign states cooperating and sharing information with each other on a voluntary basis (previous attempts to strengthen INTERPOL's status within the United Nations were unsuccessful) while Europol is embedded within the EU institutions and its activities are aligned with the strategy and policy of the European Union and its institutions.

Nevertheless, both organisations have parallel tasks: both are criminal information hubs, provide operational support to Member States, connect Member States through their respective communication channels SIENA and I-24/7, and perform strategic analyses. It would therefore be naive to think that both Europol and INTERPOL would not pursue their own ambitions, yet the Member States they serve, among others, should make every effort to ensure that both do not end up competing each other as no police officer in the field would benefit from this.

This can only be achieved by striving for maximum complementarity between both organisations, which is only possible if both organisations respect each other's strengths and core tasks while being wary of duplication. Whereas Europol's main strengths are strategic and operational analyses based on information gathered and operational support in the form of joint investigations and actions based on Operational Action Plans and EMPACT¹⁴ initiatives, INTERPOL stands out for its global connectivity, its Notices and Diffusions system and its 19 specialised databases. On the basis of these core tasks, more complementarities can be pursued in the future. For example, for the benefit of the law enforcement community, could the ambition not be to interconnect their respective communication channels SIENA and I-24/7? In terms of geographical complementarity, could INTERPOL's global connection not be used to give it a greater role in the external policy of the EU institutions and Europol

14 European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats.

in particular, despite the EU institutions' striving for more strategic autonomy? Also, with regard to innovation, more cooperation should be made possible. The EU (the Innovation Lab and the Innovation Hub) is investing in a wide area of innovation topics. There are certainly areas where Europol and the INTERPOL innovation centre in Singapore can work more closely together. According to some innovation experts of the Member States, 80% of the work done by Europol and INTERPOL in those areas is overlapping with each other. So also, here there is certainly room for improvement.

In any case, we look forward to the outcome of the currently ongoing negotiations between the European Union and INTERPOL. It would be particularly regrettable for the police community if in the European Union we did not maximise the strengths characterising both Europol and INTERPOL. It may be a difficult exercise, but it will be definitely useful in view of all the global international challenges ahead to which we can only respond with intense international cooperation.

Laws and Regulations

Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA of 18 December 2006 on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union

Directive EU 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, direction of prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data

Directive EU 2023/977 on the exchange of information between the law enforcement authorities of the Member States and repealing Council Framework Decision

Regulation EU 2016/794 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for law enforcement Cooperation (Europol), Official Journal of the European Union, 24 May 2016, L 136/53

Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals

Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006

Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU Treaty on European Union

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International Opportunities for the Study and Development of Police Science



Zoltán Hautzinger

PhD, Deputy Dean of Education, associate professor, police colonel
University of Public Service,
Faculty of Law Enforcement
hautzinger.zoltan@uni-nke.hu



Abstract

Aim: This paper, as a kind of simplified follow-up to an earlier study on international law enforcement research cooperation published in the first issue of *Belügyi Szemle* in 2011, attempts to take stock of the most important institutions that can be identified today for the support of research on law enforcement, albeit only in an exemplary manner.

Methodology: Based partly on personal experience, the study describes and illustrates the institutional options available for improving law enforcement. It recalls a working group meeting convened by INTERPOL in 2010 and the main findings of the study that was carried out on that occasion.

Findings: In particular, INTERPOL can be a useful catalyst for the coordination of police research and the practical application of scientific results in the fields of criminal law enforcement, criminology and international cooperation in criminal matters. Other voluntary institutions (e.g. AEPC) could provide a regular forum for sharing the results of research in police academics across continental boundaries.

Value: The value of the study is to draw attention to the institutions that can be major catalysts for the cultivation and development of police science.

Keywords: INTERPOL, CEPOL, INTERPA, AEPC

Introduction

The study of police science encompasses all the scientific tools and methods used to perform the functions associated with the maintenance of a safe society

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and to develop the activities of the organisations responsible for this purpose. From another point of view, the cultivation of police science also means carrying out research for the benefit of law enforcement and sharing and publishing the results of that research.

The conduct of law enforcement research and the exploitation of research results are not hindered by national borders or national legal systems. The protection of public safety or the prosecution of crimes committed, as a social responsibility (Gaál, 2022), has similar experiences in different countries, in many cases requiring international cooperation. Accordingly, international cooperation in law enforcement research is in the interest of almost all nations around the world.

Recollection of a Police Research Working Group Meeting Organised by INTERPOL

International initiatives to promote thinking in the field of law enforcement and to take account of the results of police research are not new. It is enough to think back to the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, when a working group was set up under the auspices of INTERPOL to promote police research and development worldwide in a coordinated way by disseminating the scientific results of this research.

According to the recommendations of this international consultation, police research was mainly concerned with criminology and forensic science, law enforcement technologies and the practical applicability of the results of further police research (Hautzinger, 2011). The working group included

- the Training Research at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre, one of the central police research institutes in the United States of America, which has also studied the central nervous system's ability to 'train the brain' to cope with stress, including driving skills and the practical use of firearms;
- the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention, part of the University of Wollongong in New South Wales, Australia, whose research has focused on areas such as the fight against organised crime, covert policing methods and international pollution;
- from Africa, a research unit of the Botswana Police, which focused on gold and diamond smuggling, among other classic topics, and the Police Research Centre in Egypt, which focused on research activities for practical police work;

- the National Policing Improvement Agency, which is part of the UK Home Department and was set up in 2007 to provide information and guidance to individual police forces;
- from India, the National Academy, whose research covers both the protection of certain procedural rights (e.g. use of mother tongue, banking secrecy) and the development of the national justice system;
- from Canada, the Canadian Police Research Centre, which is not only involved in police research, but also extends its professional-scientific activities to the fields of disaster management and emergency health care;
- from Germany, the Department of Law Enforcement Sciences and Training of the Forensic Science Institute (Bundeskriminalamt) in Wiesbaden, Germany, which has a significant contribution to criminal procedure, criminology and technical development; and
- from Singapore, the Singapore Police Force's Planning and Organisation Department, that works on policy implementation, organisational development and police training.

The working group meeting held in 2010 showed that police research in the broader sense is not limited to police work, but includes the results of criminal sciences, in particular criminology and forensic science, as well as all the administrative and governmental measures, not least technical and technological innovations, which can increase the efficiency of police work.

A significant benefit of this meeting was also when the participants noted that while research in continental Europe (including Germany, Hungary, and CEPOL as an international organisation) is expanding to include strategic planning in support of practical activities, the research is also expanding to include strategic planning, while in other developed countries (USA, Australia, UK, Canada), the research remains mainly at the level of police practice and organisation.

In addition to the above, the arenas in which police research is conducted vary. Looking at some examples from abroad, it can be seen that the centres of such research are either academic research institutions or government-led organisations. The former includes the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre in the United States of America, the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention at the University of Wollongong in Australia, and the Mubarak Police Academy in Egypt. For example, as a public, government-led research centre, think of the National Policing Improvement Agency in the UK and the Canadian Centre for Police Research and Policy in North America. Another common example is that police research is supervised within police forces. This happens in Botswana, India, Germany and Singapore.

Finally, in the context of police or law enforcement research, individual states and international organisations pay particular attention to modernising the prevention and prevention of threats to society. Some foreign examples are also reflected in Hungarian practice, since in Hungary, in addition to educational institutions (in particular the Faculty of Law Enforcement and the Doctoral School of Law Enforcement of University of Public Service) and police departments (such as the International Training Centre), institutions not belonging to the police (Hungarian Institute for Forensic Sciences) are also involved in law enforcement and police research.

As a final conclusion of my previously published paper, I concluded that *'the use of the results of such studies could perhaps be even more effective if they were standardised nationally and internationally, if the results were published not only in the language of the country concerned but also in English, and if other countries were involved in the international coordination of police or law enforcement research by INTERPOL.'* (Hautzinger, 2011).

The aim of the present short essay is to take stock of the institutions that have been the scene or supporting partners of police science and police research in the decades following the earlier INTERPOL initiative – without claiming completeness, but rather by way of an exemplary list – and the forms of support that international police science cooperation has taken.

Some Traditional Areas of Police Research

INTERPOL

The idea of international coordination of experience in police research was conceived under the auspices of INTERPOL's Group of Experts on Police Training, which has made the international police organisation an international centre for the coordination of police research. This coordination is not far from the mission of INTERPOL, as its primary task is to provide technical, technological, information and operational support to the work of the police forces of the member countries, and the main areas of INTERPOL's activity and the databases created to support them also guide the development of police research. Such territory includes public and national security, the fight against terrorism, trafficking and smuggling of human beings, drug abuse, financial and economic crime, corruption, the fight against organised criminal groups based on the commission of the above offences and certain databases (fingerprints, documents, DNA, weapons, works of art, motor vehicles, etc.) created for the purpose of reducing the commission of the above offences (Hautzinger, 2011).

However, nowadays, INTERPOL is no longer just an information collecting and disseminating organisation but is also able to analyse and evaluate the data it receives, with the help of the specialists (experts, analysts) available in the fields it covers, and to formulate recommendations or strategic objectives based on their conclusions (Hegyaljai, 2015).

European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

CEPOL, as a virtual network of European police academies, colleges and universities, aims to promote cross-border cooperation in the fields of law enforcement, crime prevention, public security and public order, by widely disseminating its research results, organising conferences, seminars, symposia, publications, electronic knowledge bases (Hautzinger, 2011).

In the field of police research, the Network of National Research and Science Correspondents should be thought of as a dedicated organisation, whose task is to ensure that tried and tested practices in areas directly supporting police work are made widely known, that communication on police research is possible within each Member State, and not least that Member States can participate in each research project. The main areas of activity of this network are:

- to identify and transmit to the various law enforcement research centres and institutions information relating to the different areas of law enforcement;
- to formulate scientifically grounded recommendations for law enforcement practice;
- to collect and make available electronically the literature on law enforcement;
- to support projects involving comparative law enforcement research;
- to publish the results of law enforcement research as a scientific resource in CEPOL's *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin*, and
- to organise conferences as a scientific platform (CEPOL's Annual Police research and Science Conferences) ([URL1](#)).

Of these, the *CEPOL's Research and Science Bulletin*, which has been a source of literature for police academics since 2009, is particularly noteworthy ([URL2](#)).

International Organisations for Law Enforcement Education

International Association of Police Academies (INTERPA)

The International Association of Police Academies (hereinafter: INTERPA) is an international organisation founded by Turkey for the cooperation of police

academies and their equivalent institutions responsible for police (police officer) training, established on 2 July 2011 with the participation of 24 police academies and other training institutions from 22 countries.

INTERPA was established with the aim of creating a platform for communication and cooperation between law enforcement training institutions, which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement education and training on a wide scale. The organisation seeks to increase the capacity and raise the standards of law enforcement training, in accordance with international law and human rights requirements throughout the world. It also aims to maximise cooperation and coordination between law enforcement training members by optimising the use of existing resources and sharing best practice and research results, and to enable exchanges between national training institutions for both teachers and students.

From 2021, Hungary becomes a member of INTERPA through the Faculty of Law Enforcement of University of Public Service.

Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC)

As the European Higher Education Area now encompasses almost the whole of Europe, and as a result of this a common knowledge market is beginning to emerge (Szabó, 2017), so too is law enforcement higher education beginning to take on an increasingly collaborative framework. The Association of European Police Colleges, which has been in existence since 1996, has a key objective to share best practices in police training. In addition, this association is also an opportunity to take stock of current practices in law enforcement higher education across the Member States, but also to address the current issues in policing, from serious threats to public safety to the applicability of artificial intelligence in law enforcement.

The areas of international exchange of experience for this organisation are the scientific conferences, which thematically discuss specific law enforcement, professional area on an annual basis. Examples of such conferences include:

- Virtual Reality in Police Training. Prague, 2023;
- Law Enforcement Training – Good Practices of Bachelor and Master Level Education. Budapest, 2021;
- Mass Killings. Lyon, 2019;
- Domestic Violence. Baku, 2018;
- Future of Migration – challenges and steps to address them. Tbilisi, 2017;

- Preventing Radicalisation and its Implementation in Police Training. Antalya, 2016.¹

It is important to note that the scientific products of the conferences, which are of broad interest, are of limited public use but accessible to those involved in law enforcement education and research. The exception to this is the issues related to the actualities of law enforcement bachelor's and master's programmes, which were discussed at the Budapest conference in 2021 and are available in a structured way with the support of the University of Public Service and the Hungarian Association of Police Sciences (Kovács & Mészáros, 2021).

A similar conference-organising approach to the AEPC's international consultation can be seen in the initiative taken by the Faculty of Law Enforcement of University of Public Service, which aims to provide a forum for the topics that are becoming more current in law enforcement work and education. This is the International Symposium on Law Enforcement Research, which was first organised in 2022, and the results of this symposium are also available on an electronic platform in Hungary (Czenczer, Kovács & Mészáros, 2023).

Summary

The aim of this short paper was to highlight some of the institutional arrangements for the promotion of police science and police research in the international dimension of today's world, following the first meeting of a working group on police science and police research convened by INTERPOL in 2010.

It is important to note that the institutions mentioned are not new but are long-standing organisations that have been active for several decades and have traditionally been supporters and catalysts of law enforcement science, either from the law enforcement profession or from the field of law enforcement higher education.

In particular, INTERPOL can be a vital catalyst for the coordination of law enforcement research and the practical application of scientific results in the fields of criminal justice, criminology and international criminal cooperation. CEPOL can also support European police training by providing a platform for educational and scientific cooperation between training centres and by ensuring the preservation of the scientific value of the resulting scientific knowledge through its scientific journal.

¹ For more about AEPC events and reports, visit: <https://www.aepc.net/>.

INTERPA and AEPC, as the umbrella organisations of the various law enforcement higher education institutions, can be a regular meeting forum for law enforcement higher education institutions through their voluntary organisations, transcending continental borders. In this context, the network of contacts between the various educational and research collaborations can be developed in a more informal way, focusing specifically on particular research issues.

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Online links in the article

- URL1: *CEPOL Management Board Decisions. 2008*. <https://www.cepoleuropa.eu/2008-management-board-decisions>
- URL2: *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin*. <http://bulletin.cepoleuropa.eu/index.php/bulletin/issue/archive>

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INTERPOL: The Past, Present and Future of International Police Cooperation



Jürgen Stock

Secretary General
INTERPOL
interpol@interpol.int

Abstract

Aim: The study aims to show that INTERPOL, established a century ago, remains committed to fostering international law enforcement cooperation and secure intelligence sharing among 195 member countries.

Methodology: In his study, the author draws on official INTERPOL documents and the organisation's activities in relation to specific criminal organisations to illustrate the challenges facing the organisation in the modern era, the responses to these challenges and the possible directions for future developments.

Findings: Its National Central Bureaus (NCBs) enable global collaboration and swift responses to cross-border crimes. Evolving global threats, accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, make international cooperation essential. INTERPOL plays a pivotal role at the nexus of global threats and individual crimes. Terrorism, organised crime, cybercrime, and the rise of artificial intelligence present pressing challenges. Projects like I-CAN and I-GRIP illustrate successful global efforts. INTERPOL's mission, based on trust, neutrality, reciprocity, and operational security, has proven its effectiveness in addressing modern law enforcement challenges.

Value: The article gives an overview of the organisation's recent achievements, illustrated with some recent examples.

Keywords: INTERPOL centenary, international police cooperation, cybercrime, artificial intelligence

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Introduction

100 years ago, INTERPOL was established to provide the world with a neutral and trusted platform for national law enforcement agencies to securely share intelligence, without ever losing control over the sensitive information they own. From its very beginnings, the mission of INTERPOL has been to foster law enforcement cooperation for a safer world.

As the Organisation has grown over the years, today counting 195 member countries, its mission remains fundamentally the same. Indeed, as we face an increasingly complex threat landscape, the role of INTERPOL as a global early warning system has never been so essential. The continuing success of this multilateral model rests on two fundamental and mutually reinforcing elements: trust – by our members; and neutrality – by the Organisation, no matter the environment around it.

INTERPOL occupies a unique space in law enforcement, as a police organisation, an international organisation, and a global player.

It is our National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in our 195 member countries, each embedded in national law enforcement, which are the backbone of our model of international law enforcement cooperation through a single, secure global operational communication network. Through this network, INTERPOL is also able to reach specialised units and frontline officers deployed in the field.

Today, our 19 global databases contain more than 133 million records shared by foreign law enforcement. In the first nine months of 2023 alone, nearly 5 billion checks were made against INTERPOL's databases, generating some 960,000 hits. Law enforcement information running through this network has a purpose: bringing criminals to justice. All information exchange is enshrined by the principles of INTERPOL's Constitution: a neutral platform, uniting law enforcement to combat transnational crime, irrespective of political, racial or religious differences and armed conflict.

Today, we face a profound evolution of the global threat landscape which has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The crime encountered in the streets is connected to the world in ways never seen before. As police we face the challenge of being limited by our national jurisdiction, while crime is borderless. In today's landscape, there is no guarantee the answers will lie within our borders. We cannot predict from where the next threat will come, or who holds the key piece of information that will prevent it.

The following two examples perfectly highlight this point:

- A piece of a Syrian passport, without other identification details except its number was found at the crime scene after the suicide attacks at Stade de

France in 2015. NCB Damascus had reported that passport as one of a large batch that had been stolen. We secured the assistance of NCB Damascus within hours, despite Syria being in the midst of a civil war.

- An Afghan national attempting to illegally enter the Schengen area was detected by border officers. After cross checking his information with INTERPOL databases, his fingerprints were found to match those recovered from an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan almost a decade earlier.

Our global reach means we monitor and analyse criminal trends worldwide; while as police we provide assistance in individual criminal investigations, placing us at the intersection of global threats and individual crimes.

Changing Face of Terrorism

Nearly four decades ago, INTERPOL's General Assembly recognised the need to support global efforts to combat terrorism. Since then, law enforcement worldwide has worked together to design appropriate preparedness and response to the ever-changing flows of terrorism.

As the threats have evolved, so too has INTERPOL's Counter Terrorism outlook, strategy and operational capabilities. A global strategy is underpinned by five Action Streams implemented through a hybrid, region-focused decentralisation model. This reflects the terrorist landscape we face, where global ideologies and mobility combine with pledges by local affiliates, and the unique features of each theatre. The response must therefore be global in breadth, but also tailored to each frontline.

Terrorist groups, regardless of their motivation, continue to integrate digital and technological advances to expand their communities online and refine their *modi operandi*. For example, together with traditional social media applications, gaming platforms continue to be a channel for recruitment and sharing extremist ideologies, particularly among younger targets.

Through INTERPOL, police can share intelligence and alerts on individuals and networks, to better understand their methods, motives and financing and – ultimately – to identify and arrest suspects.

Indeed, INTERPOL's unique platform and role has been enshrined in nearly 50 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the majority focused on combating terrorism.

Organised Crime – A National Security Threat

While terrorism is a recognised danger to global security, it is clear that organised crime – in all its different forms – is becoming stronger and more powerful, its influence growing around the world. Today, it constitutes a national security threat. We are seeing increasing infiltration of the legal economy and politics combined with a rise of violence in the streets, both of which require a renewed commitment to increased international police cooperation.

If one group clearly represents the organised crime threat to international peace and security, it is the 'Ndrangheta. Involved in a wide range of organised criminal activities, from drug trafficking and money laundering to extortion and fixing public contracts, the 'Ndrangheta has infiltrated political and economic environments across more than 40 countries – generating an estimated 50 billion euros each year. This was why with the Italian authorities we launched the INTERPOL Cooperation Against 'Ndrangheta project (I-CAN). Since its creation in 2021, I-CAN has resulted in the arrest of nearly 50 'Ndrangheta members all over the world, including several high-level members. These include Rocco Morabito, who was considered one of the world's leading drug traffickers. He was the subject of a Red Notice issued by Italy in 1995. Arrested in Uruguay in 2017 he escaped from prison in 2019. He was apprehended again in Brazil on 24 May 2021 thanks to the support provided by the I-CAN project, and extradited to Italy in July 2022.

The complexity of this organised crime network, like other criminal groups cannot be addressed bilaterally. Without coordination facilitated by INTERPOL, these arrests – and many others – would not have happened.

Criminality Across the Globe

The pandemic; armed conflicts worldwide; climate change; energy issues and poverty are among the forces influencing criminality across the globe. Each crisis is an opportunity for criminals; together, they represent a perfect storm.

Adding to the complexity are the challenges posed by cybercrime, which by its very nature is borderless.

Cybercrime stands, without a doubt, as one of the most challenging and fastest growing criminal threats faced by the international community. The threat is severe and far-reaching. Indeed, the first-ever INTERPOL Global Crime Trend report showed the majority of our membership considered cybercrime, and financial crimes as the world's leading crime threats. And, since its publication

in October 2022, we have seen an increase in incidents relating to ransomware, malware attacks, phishing, hacking and data theft. Ransomware attacks in particular have continued to grow in sophistication, focus and stealth. The barriers to entry for cybercrime have lowered dramatically and we are now seeing cybercrime-as-a-service tools that can be purchased for the price of a takeaway meal.

One organised crime group which has almost become a by-word for online crime is Black Axe – a violent mafia-style gang renowned for cyber-enabled financial fraud.

In May 2023, INTERPOL coordinated Operation Jackal which mobilised police forces, financial crime units and cybercrime agencies across 21 countries around the world to deliver a targeted strike against Black Axe and similar West African organised crime groups.

The results from just two weeks of action coordinated by our Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Centre (IFCACC) included the seizure or freezing of nearly EUR 2.2 million, more than 100 arrests and 208 bank accounts blocked.

It was through IFCACC that we developed our Global Rapid Intervention of Payments project, I-GRIP, which enables member countries to submit and handle time-critical requests to follow, intercept or provisionally freeze illicit proceeds of crime around the world. Within the first year of the project, the mechanism helped intercept more than USD 190 million believed to be the proceeds of online fraud.

Artificial Intelligence as a Driver

While we are developing solutions to current problems, we can expect developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to emerge as a driver of increased cyber and cyber-enabled crime activity. Large-scale extortion, the production of more sophisticated spam fishing mails and text, fake or cloned identities, or the development of the next generation of ransomware attacks are just a few examples. Technology is not good or bad, it is neutral. The outcome depends on by who and how it is being used.

AI technologies have huge potential to support the work of law enforcement.

With the massive increase of data in every police case – and with the growing technical complexity of many criminal activities – we in law enforcement need to leverage AI simply to try and keep up. Nevertheless, it is essential that this is done in a responsible way, in line with policing principles, human rights and ethical standards. This is why, with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, we developed the *'Toolkit for Responsible AI*

Innovation in Law Enforcement’ to support law enforcement agencies navigate the complex task of institutionalising responsible AI.

While national authorities retain full autonomy over their AI journey, the Toolkit is aimed at helping law enforcement policymakers navigate the debates and discussions that form an integral part of this process.

Technology For the Future

Police data systems have proliferated on a regional and sub-regional basis, opening new opportunities. But without a coherent global information-sharing architecture, the world will only see new layers for police data to push through.

These trends share a common thread: the sheer volume of information and international flows is making it increasingly difficult to identify what is important and what is just noise. Ensuring INTERPOL remains at the forefront of innovation both using and providing the technological tools necessary for effective international police cooperation, is essential. Criminals are already exploiting the Metaverse, presenting significant challenges to investigators, as not all acts that are criminalised in the physical world are considered crimes when committed in the virtual world.

However, in order for law enforcement to understand the Metaverse, they must experience it. This was why, at our 90th INTERPOL General Assembly in New Delhi, we unveiled the first ever Metaverse specifically designed for law enforcement worldwide.

The inconvenient truth is that many nations are ill-equipped to address these challenges. In a post-pandemic environment, where a global financial downturn is upon us, the scenario is hardly going to change.

This is the purpose of the INTERPOL *‘Capabilities for Operational Relevance’* (I-CORE) programme. The I-CORE vision is about embracing the promise new technologies offer us today. And it is this very vision that INTERPOL’s global membership supported in its unanimous endorsement of I-CORE at our General Assembly in 2019. Smart algorithms, biometrics and data mining are waiting to be placed at the service of police officers and the populations they protect, across the globe. Every year, checks made from National Central Bureaus, borders and in our streets yield more than a million hits against these databases. Investigations in one part of the world leading to the solving of crimes half a world away. I-CORE is about building on INTERPOL’s solid foundations, and exponentially augmenting the value it returns to the frontlines. For developing nations and emerging markets, I-CORE promises to facilitate increased

participation in the global network of law enforcement cooperation. Data is the lifeblood of policing and an essential part of INTERPOL's mission is to make sure that information gets where it is needed, when it is needed.

Key Third Parties

Effective multilateral cooperation is the only way to tackle today's transnational threats. Duplicating information channels, contact points, and operational efforts risks information falling through the cracks. It risks criminals taking advantage of known gaps in coordination.

Over the years, INTERPOL has developed partnerships with regional bodies and their respective law enforcement arms – such as the African Union (Afripol), the League of Arab States (AIMC), the Police Community of the Americas (Ameripol), ASEAN (Aseanapol) the European Union (Europol and Frontex) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCCPol).

This cooperation is crucial to avoid duplication, close information gaps, and maximise resources while addressing the terrorist threat through a regional tailored approach. What is clear is that international action can bring concrete results in the field against crime and terrorism, when applied systematically and consistently.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a source of profound disruption for law enforcement across the globe called to the frontlines of the public health crisis, addressing even more challenging tasks, and a new, unique operational landscape.

It is addressing current and emerging threats that INTERPOL will continue to act as the gateway for international police information to all regional law enforcement bodies and national agencies in our mission to make the world a safer place.

As we look ahead to 100 more years of police cooperation, it is important to focus on what have already achieved as global effective model.

A model based on sovereignty, neutrality and reciprocity.

A model based on operational security, and voluntary engagement.

A model that we have delivered results on.

A model that works.

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The Role of INTERPOL in the European Integrated Border Management



Mónika Herczeg

Head of Department, police colonel
Ministry of Interior,
Department for European Home Affairs
Cooperation
monika.herczeg@bm.gov.hu



Abstract

Aim: The study focuses on how the cooperation between the EU and INTERPOL fits into the European integrated border management system, how it contributes to the effectiveness of external border management, and what challenges it faces.

Methodology: The paper examines cooperation from the perspective of European integrated border management, drawing on relevant international and national literature on the topic.

Findings: By examining this cooperation, the author demonstrates that the relationship between INTERPOL and the EU border administration is vital to enhancing the EU's ability to effectively manage its borders. INTERPOL provides valuable intelligence, training and operational support to EU Member States in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and other transnational threats. Cooperation contributes significantly to improving border management practices, strengthening cross-border cooperation and ensuring the safety and security of EU citizens.

Value: The study presents the relationship between INTERPOL and the EU border management agencies through the European integrated border management model and highlights the challenges involved.

Keywords: INTERPOL, integrated border management, European Union

Introduction

One of the greatest achievements of the European Union (EU) is the abolition of internal borders and the creation of the right to free movement. The principle

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of free movement allows every EU citizen to travel, work and live in any EU country without special formalities. The Schengen Agreement¹ complements this freedom by allowing citizens to move within the Schengen area without border controls.² However, EU integration entails many responsibilities and tasks for Member States. As illegal migration and crime are not subject to geographical borders, the creation of the Schengen area has placed particular emphasis on the management of external borders. The free movement of goods, services, capital and persons within the EU requires a well-functioning border management infrastructure.

To compensate for the so-called security deficit resulting from the uncontrolled crossing of internal borders, the countries participating in cooperation must develop a common border management policy that guarantees the maintenance of internal security in the area. A border management system that can effectively tackle cross-border crime, terrorism and illegal migration, as well as facilitate trade and the legal movement of people, is therefore essential for security and stable economic growth. Borders must therefore be both open and closed both gates and walls (Marenin, 2006).

The study examines the challenges recently identified, presents the European Integrated Border Management (EBM), discusses the border management aspects of the cooperation between the EU and INTERPOL, and examines how this type of cooperation contributes to the effectiveness of external border control.

European Integrated Border Management

Although responsibility for the borders lies primarily with Member States,³ the EU has set up a number of internal mechanisms, instruments and agencies, as

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- 1 The Schengen Agreement was signed by five members of the European Economic Community – France, Germany (then known as the Federal Republic of Germany), Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – on board the Princesse Marie-Astrid, simplifying border crossing formalities and opening up the prospect of a complete dismantling of borders.
 - 2 The Schengen area currently consists of 27 European countries (22 of which are EU members): Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Croatia. As part of the area without internal border controls, these countries do not carry out border control at their internal borders (i.e. the border between two Schengen States), but carry out harmonised checks at their external borders (i.e. the border between a Schengen State and a non-Schengen State) based on clearly defined criteria. As a result, EU citizens and non-EU citizens alike can travel freely within the Schengen area: they are only checked when they cross the external border.
 - 3 Article 7 of Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulation (EU) 1052/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2016/1624.

well as various forms of cooperation with Schengen associated countries and other third actors, to ensure the effective management of its common external borders. Since the establishment of the Schengen area, it has been faced with constant challenges and the demands for more effective control of the external borders have increasingly necessitated the development of an integrated border management system.

Integrated border management is a comprehensive and coordinated approach to border management in which all relevant authorities, agencies and stakeholders work together to achieve common objectives. The EU has long been committed to developing European Integrated Border Management (EIBM), with the main objective of ensuring the smooth and efficient flow of people and goods across the EU borders and addressing the security challenges facing the EU. This requires the development of procedures, standards, practices and consistent border management mechanisms that provide a level playing field for all Member States, preventing criminals and criminal organisations from exploiting the weaknesses of a country.

The idea of developing the EIBM was born in the context of the development of the Schengen area following the signing of the Schengen Agreement and the Schengen Implementing Convention.⁴

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁵ (Treaty of Lisbon) provides the legal and policy framework for the EIBM. Article 77(1)(c) of the Lisbon Treaty states that the EU must develop a policy aimed at the gradual introduction of an integrated management system for external borders ([URL1](#)).

The Lisbon Treaty concept of integrated border management was consolidated as a legally binding instrument by the Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard (hereinafter ‘the Regulation’) (Kiss, 2018). In addition to establishing the European Border and Coast Guard, composed of Frontex and the authorities responsible for border management in the Member States, the Regulation defined the components of the EIBM:

- border control;
- operations to search for and rescue people in distress at sea;
- analysis of the risks to security;
- cooperation between Member States supported and coordinated by Frontex;

4 The Schengen Implementing Convention, signed on 19 June 1990, set out the process for implementing the agreement. The Convention entered fully into force in 1995, with the participation of the five founding members as well as Spain and Portugal.

5 The Lisbon Treaty, also known as the ‘*Lisbon Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community*’, was signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009.

- inter-agency cooperation;
- cooperation with third countries;
- technical and operational measures within the Schengen area;
- return of third country nationals;
- use of available state-of-the-art technologies;
- quality control mechanisms to ensure the implementation of EU law on border management;
- solidarity mechanisms, including EU funding ([URL2](#)).

The Regulation was revised in 2019 in response to the protracted migration crisis in Europe.⁶ Regulation (EU) No 2019/1986 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷ (hereafter the EBCG Regulation) has on the one hand expanded the main elements of the EIBM, specifically mentioning cooperation between the relevant EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. On the other hand, it has set the framework for the policy governance of European IBM by defining the policy cycle for European and national IBM strategies ([URL3](#)).

The EIBM therefore includes several key elements:

- First, the establishment of common rules on border controls, visa issuance and asylum applications.
- Secondly, cooperation and coordination, both at national and EU level, between the different border control agencies and authorities. The latter will allow for the sharing of information, resources and best practices between border guards, customs officers, police and other relevant stakeholders to respond more effectively to threats and challenges to border security.
- Third, the use of technology and information systems to enhance surveillance, risk assessment and data sharing capabilities. The introduction and further development of modern technologies such as biometric identification, automated border control and secure communication networks will enable efficient and accurate verification of travellers' identity and documents, reducing the possibility of fraud or unauthorised entry. The EU will support the use of advanced information systems, including the Schengen Information System (SIS), the European Asylum Dactyloscopic Database (Eurodac) and the Visa Information System (VIS), and ensure interoperability between

6 The European migration crisis, also known as the European refugee crisis, is the result of the migration of people fleeing various armed conflicts, political and religious persecution or economic insecurity in the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans and Central Asia. The term was first used in the press in April 2015.

7 Regulation (EU) No 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624.

systems to facilitate the exchange of information. These technologies will help streamline border processes, improve data integrity and security, and facilitate the detection and prevention of crime.

- Fourth, the importance of capacity building and training of border guards and other relevant staff. This will ensure their proficiency in the use of new technologies, their understanding of EU legislation and their ability to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities. By increasing their skills and knowledge, Member States can strengthen their border control capabilities and effectively address emerging challenges.
- Last but not least, close cooperation with third countries and international organisations. This includes sharing intelligence information, data and best practices, promoting capacity building and training programmes, and establishing joint operations and initiatives to identify potential threats, track suspects and dismantle criminal networks. By working with external partners, the EU can more effectively address the root causes of irregular migration, enhance regional security and promote stability and prosperity in neighbouring regions (Ritecz, 2014).

Despite its many advantages, the EU's integrated border management also faces a number of challenges. One of the most significant is the balance between security concerns and the free movement of people. While maintaining security is essential, excessive border controls can disrupt the smooth flow of goods and persons and hamper economic activity. Striking the right balance is therefore critical both for security and for ensuring the benefits of the Schengen area.

Another challenge is the changing nature of threats. Criminal networks and terrorists are becoming more sophisticated and adaptable. They exploit weaknesses in border control systems, use false identities and their criminal activities are increasingly intertwined.

In addition, the uncontrolled influx of refugees and migrants is also putting significant pressure on the external borders and migration systems of Member States. A comprehensive approach that combines effective border control with humane and fair asylum procedures is needed to reduce this pressure. Striking the right balance between respect for human rights and the management of migration flows is complex, but key to maintaining the legitimacy of EU border management.

To respond adequately to the challenges, the EU's integrated border management needs to continuously evolve and adapt. One of the means to do so is to develop closer cooperation and partnership with third parties, including INTERPOL.

Cooperation with INTERPOL

The International Criminal Police Organization⁸ (INTERPOL) is an intergovernmental organisation that works across jurisdictions to fight crime and maintain global security. It currently serves as a platform for 195 member countries, including 27 EU Member States, to share and access law enforcement-related data. Its primary objectives include combating crimes such as terrorism, organised crime, cybercrime, drug trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling.

The EU and INTERPOL have long and closely cooperated in a number of areas related to crime fighting, including the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and integrated border management.

In Common Position 2005/69/JHA,⁹ the Council called on the Member States to take the necessary measures to improve cooperation between their competent law enforcement services and between themselves and those of third countries by exchanging passport data with INTERPOL with a view to preventing and combating serious and organised crime, including terrorism.

In addition, EU agencies have also concluded a number of agreements¹⁰ with INTERPOL, which set out the purpose and content of their cooperation. One of the most important of these is the cooperation agreement between INTERPOL and Europol, the text of which was approved by the Council of the European Union on 27 June 2001 and by the INTERPOL General Assembly at its 70th meeting in Budapest on 26 September 2001. This has enabled, among other things, INTERPOL to play an active role in the operational implementation of the EU policy cycle, known as EMPACT,¹¹ by supporting Member States' operational actions in cooperation with EU justice and home affairs agencies.¹²

8 Constitution of the ICPO-INTERPOL [I/CONS/GA/1956 (2017)].

9 Council Common Position of 24 January 2005 on exchanging certain data with INTERPOL.

10 The cooperation agreement between INTERPOL and Europol was signed on 5 November 2001. The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between Eurojust and INTERPOL was signed on 15 July 2013. The Memorandum of Understanding between INTERPOL and Frontex was signed on 27 May 2009. The Memorandum of Understanding between CEPOL and the INTERPOL Secretariat General was signed on 6 December 2017. The Cooperation Agreement between INTERPOL and the EMCDDA was signed on 25 September 2001.

11 The multi-annual EU policy cycle aims to address the main threats posed to the EU by organised and serious transnational crime in a coherent and systematic way by improving and strengthening cooperation between the competent services of the Member States, EU institutions and agencies, and third countries and organisations, including the private sector where appropriate.

12 Justice and home affairs agencies are EU agencies set up under Title V of the TFEU on an area of freedom, security and justice. The justice and home affairs agencies are: The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Union Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA).

INTERPOL's cooperation with the European region is supported by the INTERPOL European Commission and the Office of the INTERPOL Special Representative to the European Union. The European Commission of INTERPOL identifies regional priorities, region-specific problems of police cooperation and prepares the meetings of the European Regional Conference. On the one hand, the INTERPOL EU Special Representative's Office handles international warrants, ensuring that warrants issued by European police forces are effectively transmitted to police forces in other countries, thus facilitating cross-border criminal cooperation and the success of investigations. On the other hand, it coordinates and supports the development and implementations of operational plans between European countries, taking into account the specific crime trends and threats in the region. This activity helps European police forces to take appropriate measures (Hegyaljai, 2017).

The relationship between INTERPOL and EU border management is complex and multifaceted. In recent years, the rise of global threats such as terrorism and organised crime has made cooperation even more important. Increasing interconnectivity and mobility have led to criminals exploiting weaknesses in border management systems to facilitate their illegal activities, making the relationship between INTERPOL and EU border agencies of paramount importance in addressing the global challenges posed by transnational crime.

INTERPOL's activities in support of border management can be structured as follows:

- use of INTERPOL databases,
- providing information exchange between law enforcement agencies,
- operational and investigative support programmes,
- training and capacity building programmes.

The sharing of data and information available to INTERPOL and the coordination of international law enforcement efforts between Member States play a key role in supporting EU border management. This cooperation contributes to improving the EU's border management capabilities by helping to identify, track and arrest cross-border criminals.

An encrypted, internet-based global communications network at the Organisation's headquarters in Lyon allows INTERPOL officials and member countries to contact each other at any time. The I-24/7 secure communication system ensures that EU Member States can quickly exchange information with other Member States on suspected terrorists, foreign fighters and their networks. This real-time exchange of information is essential for border control officers to identify potential threats and prevent the movement of such persons. Joint

efforts have successfully led to the identification and arrest of individuals involved in the planning and execution of terrorist attacks. Strengthening this type of information exchange, sharing intelligence on foreign fighters and disrupting financing networks are areas where cooperation plays a key role.

INTERPOL's criminal information system databases can provide effective support in the fight against the various aspects of international organised crime. Among these, the databases on wanted persons (Nominals), stolen and lost travel documents (SLTD), stolen works of art and stolen motor vehicles (SMV/SV), as well as the database on travel documents flagged in INTERPOL warrants (TDAWN) play a key role in identifying criminals at border crossing points. This information assists border control officers in intercepting persons with stolen passports, illegal goods or wanted persons and contributes to the prevention and detection of transnational crime (Hegyaljai, 2015).

In the framework of INTERPOL cooperation, a number of initiatives have recently been implemented, such as the IDEA project, which aims to make the widest possible use of INTERPOL databases, and the FIELDS project, which are specifically related to the border management field and focused on supporting the work of border management professionals.

A key objective of the 2019–2022 IDEA project was to integrate systematic monitoring in INTERPOL databases into border control processes, which can bring significant added value to the fight against serious crime with a cross-border dimension and to enhance the EU's internal security (URL4).

Frontex, in cooperation with INTERPOL, launched in 2022 the Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS), which provides law enforcement officers and border guards with visual information in a simple format on the security features of travel documents and the most important characteristics of counterfeit or falsified documents (URL5).

The information has been collected by Frontex and can be used directly by Member States' law enforcement authorities for border control and document verification. The system displays the original and genuine documents as well as the main counterfeiting features detected on the type of document, thus facilitating the work of front-line border control officers and supporting immediate operational decision-making during document checks (URL5).

Document fraud is a driver of many other crimes, such as smuggling and trafficking of human beings, terrorist mobility, drug and arms trafficking, and the detection of counterfeit and falsified documents is therefore of paramount importance.

In addition to the above, INTERPOL plans to launch its Biometrics Centre (the Centre) in October 2023, which will provide timely, accurate and relevant identity confirmation information to support investigations, security checks

and border control activities. The Centre aims to facilitate the management and sharing of biometric data by offering a single point of access to INTERPOL biometric services for all Member States. The Centre will allow requests to search fingerprints or facial images to be submitted for comparison with data recorded in INTERPOL's biometric databases, requests to be followed up and the submitter will receive a response to the result of the search via a hit/no hit notification.

However, the relationship between INTERPOL and EU border management agencies goes beyond the mere exchange of information. INTERPOL also assists EU Member States in achieving more effective border management through its various operational and investigative support programmes. Joint operations such as Operation Neptune are a good example of successful cooperation against illicit activities on high-risk routes and transit areas. The latest Neptune IV operation, which ran from 1 July to 3 September 2022, targeted suspected terrorists and other criminals involved in serious organised crime on maritime routes between North Africa and Southern Europe, focusing on the threats posed by suspected foreign terrorist fighters using maritime routes between North Africa and Southern Europe. The operation involved eight countries – Algeria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia and Algeria. During checks at seaports and airports, officers carried out more than 2.6 million checks through the SLTD database. These checks generated 140 hits, which led to a further 14 arrests, and seizures of drugs worth USD 3.6 million, 33 kg of cocaine, around 39,400 ecstasy tablets, 133 kg of cannabis, ten stolen cars and ten firearms. The operation also targeted traffickers along the route, with French, Italian and Spanish authorities arresting several suspected traffickers and smugglers ([URL6](#)).

To give a domestic example, a joint Danube law enforcement operation has been organised every year since 2014 to detect smuggling, trafficking, illegal migration offences, document fraud, drug, cigarette and other smuggling activities, carry out general waterborne law enforcement checks on vessels and in ports, search for wanted persons, carry out enhanced labour inspections and control dangerous goods transport.

The operations, known as DARIF,¹³ involve ten countries along the Danube (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine), as well as INTERPOL, Europol and Frontex ([URL7](#)).

13 The name DARIF refers back to the Hungarian project '*Establishment of the Danube River Forum Structure – DARIF*', which was implemented between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2015, and which was linked to the 11th priority area of the European Union's Danube Macro-regional Strategy. At the final conference of the project, the representatives of the ten Member States of the project recommended the support of joint law enforcement operations to strengthen the safety of Danube transport.

In the joint operation in 2022, 1,126 officers from the 10 Member States took part, using an average of 53 service vessels and 71 service vehicles per day. A total of 105 passenger vessels, 328 cargo vessels, 212 barges, 108 fishing vessels, 34 yachts, 100 containers, 8,862 persons and 7,636 documents were checked during the operation. Checks in Europol, INTERPOL and national databases led to the arrest of three illegal migrants and two traffickers and the seizure of four forged identity documents ([URL8](#)).

In addition to information exchange and operational support, INTERPOL also offers training and capacity building programmes to EU Member States to improve their border management practices. These programmes help border control officers to develop their skills in areas such as document examination, profiling and risk assessment. By participating in the training programmes, EU border management agencies can benefit from INTERPOL's expertise and best practices to detect and apprehend persons involved in cross-border crime. This support will facilitate intelligence sharing, joint operations and the development of harmonised approaches to border management in the EU.

Challenges in Cooperation

Cooperation between INTERPOL and the European Union has the potential to bring greater efficiency and effectiveness in the fight against international crime, but it faces a number of difficulties and challenges.

The first and perhaps most important difficulty is that INTERPOL is an international organisation, whereas the European Union is a regional cooperation with Member States. INTERPOL works with many countries around the world, whereas the European Union is limited to a specific area of the continent. As a consequence, cooperation requires the development of comprehensive agreements and legal frameworks. The EU has to take into account the different legal and political regimes of the Member States as well as the general provisions of INTERPOL. Since INTERPOL is in contact with a number of countries with different legal systems and procedural rules, the EU needs to compensate for these differences in order to adopt a unified approach and develop common strategies. This can be challenging as different legal cultures and systems have different priorities and different approaches.

Negotiations for a cooperation agreement between the EU and INTERPOL¹⁴ are still ongoing, with the aim of concluding an agreement to regulate cooperation

14 Council Decision (EU) 2021/1312 of 19 July 2021 authorising the opening of negotiations for a cooperation agreement between the European Union and the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL).

between the EU and INTERPOL in the fields of law enforcement, judicial cooperation in criminal matters and border security (as part of border management).

One of the most important challenges for future cooperation is the implementation and application of the so-called interoperability regulations,¹⁵ and in this context the cooperation agreement should provide for the necessary safeguards and guarantees to ensure that Member States and EU agencies have controlled access to INTERPOL's SLTD and TDAWN databases through the European search portal (ESP), to the extent necessary for the performance of their tasks and in accordance with their access rights.

Interoperability between EU systems aims to ensure that end-users – in particular border management and law enforcement agencies, immigration, asylum and judicial authorities – have fast, smooth, regular and controlled access to the information they need to carry out their tasks. Thus, once the interoperability framework is fully implemented, the possibility to check INTERPOL's SLTD and TDAWN databases will be available to all authorities with access, including border control authorities, at central level, which should further increase the efficiency of border control.

The third challenge is the issue of information exchange. INTERPOL and the EU aim to track and apprehend criminals, for which efficient and rapid exchange of information is essential. However, as Member States hold a wide range of information and maintain separate databases, the collection and sharing of national data for INTERPOL and EU activities can pose serious difficulties, especially with regard to data protection aspects. Harmonising legal frameworks, extradition procedures and operational protocols remains a complex task. Coordination challenges arise mainly from differences in procedural rules, privacy concerns and data protection rules. Striking the right balance between information exchange and the protection of citizens' rights remains a critical issue in this context.

Finally, political and diplomatic challenges can also have an impact on INTERPOL-EU cooperation. The EU must consult and negotiate with different Member States and therefore reach consensus on common strategies and

15 Regulation (EU) 2019/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the field of borders and visa and amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EU) 2016/399, (EU) 2017/2226, (EU) 2018/1240, (EU) 2018/1726 and (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decisions 2004/512/EC and 2008/633/JHA.
Regulation (EU) 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the field of police and judicial cooperation, asylum and migration and amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1726, (EU) 2018/1862 and (EU) 2019/816.

activities. This process can be time-consuming and Member States may have different priorities. This is further complicated by the possible different interests and priorities of other INTERPOL members. The effectiveness of cooperation therefore depends to a large extent on the commitment of Member States and the resources made available. INTERPOL can only be as effective as its member countries allow it to be. It is therefore crucial that EU Member States provide sufficient financial and human resources to support INTERPOL's activities and maximise the benefits of cooperation.

Summary

The study highlighted that integrated border management is a vital element in the EU's efforts to enhance security, facilitate trade and travel, and promote cooperation between Member States.

Through its objectives, key elements, challenges and future perspectives, the EU's integrated border management is constantly evolving and adapting to changing circumstances and will remain a key element of the EU's overall governance and security framework.

The link between INTERPOL and the EU border management is vital to enhance the EU's ability to effectively manage its borders. INTERPOL can provide valuable intelligence, training and operational support to EU Member States in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and other transnational threats. Cooperation will facilitate information exchange, joint operations and training initiatives.

Cooperation between INTERPOL and the European Union can therefore be useful in the fight against crime, but it poses a number of challenges and difficulties. International legal and political differences, challenges to the proper exchange of information and interoperability, as well as political and diplomatic issues, can all be significant barriers to successful cooperation.

The EU's position of compromise and flexibility, and the development of closer links between Member States, can help strengthen cooperation between INTERPOL and the EU. By adopting a comprehensive and harmonised approach to border management, strengthening the partnership with INTERPOL in capacity building efforts, facilitating information exchange and cooperating in joint operations, the EU can better address transnational threats, which will help to build a safer, more prosperous and integrated Europe.

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Online links in the article

- URL1: *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Protocols Annexes to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Declarations annexed to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference which adopted the Treaty of Lisbon, signed on 13 December 2007 Tables of equivalences.* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016ME%2FTXT>
- URL2: *Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on the European Border and Coast Guard and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EC) No 863/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 and Council Decision 2005/267/EC.* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016R1624>

URL3: *Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624.* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019R1896>

URL4: *INTERPOL Databases Enhanced Access – IDEA project.* <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Border-management/Project-IDEA>

URL5: *A global resource to help detect counterfeit and forged travel and identity documents – FIELDS database.* <https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/Border-management/FIELDS-database>

URL6: *INTERPOL maritime operation nets terrorist suspects.* <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2022/INTERPOL-maritime-operation-nets-terrorist-suspects>

URL7: *A Dunai Folyami Fórum struktúrájának létrehozása.* <https://bmprojektek.kormany.hu/a-dunai-folyami-forum-strukturajanak-letrehozasa-darif>

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Laws and Regulations

Agreement between INTERPOL and Europol

Agreement between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders

Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Protocols Annexes to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Declarations annexed to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference which adopted the Treaty of Lisbon, signed on 13 December 2007
Tables of equivalences

Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders

Council common position 2005/69/JHA of 24 January 2005 on exchanging certain data with INTERPOL

Council decision (EU) 2021/1312 of 19 July 2021 authorising the opening of negotiations for a cooperation agreement between the European Union and the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL)

Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)

Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624 OJ L 295

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Regulation (EU) 2019/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the field of police and judicial cooperation, asylum and migration and amending Regulations (EU) 2018/1726, (EU) 2018/1862 and (EU) 2019/816

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INTERPOL Washington Commemorates 100 Years of INTERPOL's Work to Build a Safer World for All



Michael A. Hughes

Director, Committee Member
United States National Central Bureau (INTERPOL Washington)
INTERPOL Executive Committee
usncbope@usncb.usdoj.gov

Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study is to examine the past, present, and future role of international law enforcement cooperation through INTERPOL in combatting transnational crime.

Methodology: The author of this study is the Director of INTERPOL Washington, who conducts a thorough review of the challenges the agency confronts in its efforts to advance homeland security and build a safer world for all.

Findings: INTERPOL has made many advances and had many successes throughout the first 100 years of its existence. But the work is far from done. The world faces new and emerging threats from transnational criminal organizations that take nothing less than a lockstep approach between partners to keep our countries safe. The only way to effectively combat transnational crime is through international police partnerships.

Value: This study should convey that now, more than ever, we must continue to work together to build strong partnerships, harness the power of ever-changing technology, and invest in our people to ensure that we can stay ahead of the growing number of threats that our countries and communities face every day.

Keywords: INTERPOL, police partnerships, transnational crime, USNCB

Transnational crime and terrorism pose formidable threats to public safety and national security worldwide. Offenses with an international nexus have evolved from predominantly simple acts of ordinary law crime committed by

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small groups of individuals into large-scale, highly networked criminal enterprises that span many countries, generate enormous illicit proceeds, threaten economic stability and national sovereignty, and, in some instances, claim thousands of innocent lives. Further enabling their ability to operate, offenders oftentimes exploit lax or non-existent laws to commit crimes and then flee beyond the affected country's geographical and legal jurisdiction to escape apprehension and punishment.

Compounding this problem, many of today's criminal and terrorist organisations utilise sophisticated information and communication technologies whose rapid evolution and access-limiting capabilities such as digital encryption, anonymisers, and gated chatrooms have outpaced law enforcement's ability to develop and deploy effective countermeasures. Consequently, the same advances in technology that facilitate legitimate communication and commerce also enable criminals and terrorists to cross international borders undetected; conduct and mask illicit financial transactions; defraud single individuals and entire institutions; move illegal drugs, weapons, and other forms of contraband; and incite, facilitate, and carry out violent attacks against innocent civilian populations from a safe distance and with a high degree of anonymity.

In order to contend with these challenges, law enforcement authorities must be able to overcome a multitude of political, legal, cultural, and linguistic barriers that complicate the exchange of criminal investigative information and support across national borders and administrations – barriers that are especially problematic when the failure to detect even a single individual, device, or illicit substance such as fentanyl or other chemical or biological agent carries with it the potential to harm or kill hundreds or even thousands of our citizens.

The transnational threats we face today are present, both physically as well as virtually, in communities of all sizes. Consequently, we must be able to achieve and maintain an unprecedented level of international law enforcement cooperation if we are to prevail against them. Now entering its 100th year, the International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL, provides its member countries with the necessary communications framework and essential tools and services that lead to timely results for all law enforcement partners engaged in the fight. For the United States, the information sharing capabilities made available through INTERPOL are today more important than ever in achieving our public safety and national security objectives, as well as those of our international counterparts.

Information Sharing: The Key to International Law Enforcement Cooperation

The sharing of criminal investigative information has long been recognised as being essential to achieving true international law enforcement cooperation. As early as 1914, in the *'Summary of Wishes'* compiled during the First International Criminal Police Congress in Monaco, the first wish expressed by the representatives in attendance was to see: *'...direct, official contacts between police forces of the different countries generalised and improved, so as to allow investigations likely to facilitate the action of criminal justice'*.

To that end, the members' second wish was: *'...for Governments to agree to allow judicial and police authorities to use international post, telegram and telephone services free of charge in order to facilitate the arrest of criminals'*.

Since that time, a succession of technological developments ranging from telegraphy to radio broadcasts to the Internet have raised police-to-police communications capabilities from the most basic exchange of coded, text-based messages to the real-time, global transmission of biometric data – fingerprints, photographs, DNA profiles – that can be used in investigations ranging from a local homicide with an international connection to war crimes and crimes against humanity. In order to keep pace with these advances, INTERPOL has continuously developed and expanded both its technical capacity and the legal framework under which its member countries can share actionable criminal investigative information through its communications systems in a manner that upholds the Organisation's foundational principles of neutrality, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

Among its most important provisions, *INTERPOL's Rules on the Processing of Data* (RPD) entitles each National Central Bureau to direct access to the INTERPOL Information System *'...in the performance of their functions pursuant to the Constitution'*.¹ Further, the RPD entitles NCBs alone *'...to authorise the institutions of their countries to access the INTERPOL Information System and determine the extent of their access and processing rights'* and charges them with taking *'...to the extent possible, all the necessary measures to allow the criminal investigation authorities involved in international police cooperation in the countries...'* to have access to the system.² Consequently, through the strategic application of each of these authorities and responsibilities, INTERPOL

1 Article 6: Access to the INTERPOL Information System.

2 Article 21: Granting authorisations to directly access the INTERPOL Information System at the national level.

Washington, the U.S. National Central Bureau (USNCB), has today made the sharing of INTERPOL data a cornerstone of our Nation's efforts to obtain international law enforcement cooperation all over the world.

Law Enforcement Information Sharing in the United States: The Role of the USNCB

Unlike many countries, the United States does not have a central national police authority. Instead, law enforcement services are provided by nearly 18,000 individual agencies and departments divided along jurisdictional lines: local, state, federal, tribal, and territorial. However, no matter an agency's size or mission, when crime crosses our national borders, these agencies all need access to timely and actionable criminal investigative information from our international counterparts regarding the subject, object, or activity of official concern. In order to satisfy this need, the USNCB has optimised the information sharing tools and authorities made available to it by INTERPOL.

As the United States' National Central Bureau, the USNCB serves as the official point of contact and coordination in INTERPOL's global law enforcement information and communications network, ensuring liaison with U.S. law enforcement authorities, the NCBs in other member countries, and INTERPOL's General Secretariat in Lyon, France. A component of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the USNCB is co-managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) whose purpose in part is to ensure that INTERPOL's global criminal investigative data and resources are made available across the entire U.S. law enforcement community.

Established in 1969, the USNCB operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year responding to requests for international law enforcement assistance and cooperation submitted by both our domestic and international law enforcement partners – a role and responsibility codified under the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, which charges the USNCB in relevant part to *'transmit information of a criminal justice, humanitarian, or other law enforcement related nature between National Central Bureaus of INTERPOL member countries, and law enforcement agencies within the United States and abroad; and respond to requests by law enforcement agencies, and other legitimate requests by appropriate organisations, institutions and individuals, when in agreement with the INTERPOL constitution'*.³

3 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 28 Subpart F-2 INTERPOL-United States National Central Bureau §0.34 General Functions.

Supported by a multi-sector workforce comprised of permanent DOJ employees, government contractors, and law enforcement personnel seconded to it by agencies from across the government, the USNCB's blended staffing structure contributes to a dynamic working environment that fosters and supports interagency collaboration and a 'whole of government' approach to combating transnational criminal and terrorist threats.

The USNCB's Strategic Approach to Information Sharing

Guided by principles first set forth in its 2012 *Law Enforcement Information Sharing Strategy*, the USNCB has leveraged existing national information sharing environments to provide query access to select INTERPOL data sets to all U.S. law enforcement authorities. Having first made this access available to the individual officer or agent working at street level, the USNCB has since established integrated information sharing platforms that today enable key interagency partners to conduct hundreds of millions of queries of INTERPOL data annually for purposes that include criminal investigation, traveller screening, terrorist watch listing, and immigration and border security.

In addition to their investigative and deterrent value, the integrated information sharing solutions developed by the USNCB generate important criminal intelligence regarding the identities, origins, migratory movement, and associates of transnational criminals and terrorists. Moreover, because it does not contain classified national security information, the information that is produced can and is being readily and securely shared through the INTERPOL Information System with both our domestic law enforcement partners and their counterparts in other INTERPOL member countries for their use in determining the threat potential of persons located in, or attempting to enter, their respective jurisdictions.

A New and Vital Mission: Building Foreign Partner Capacity

The USNCB's strategy for integrating access to INTERPOL data is based on tools and authorities available to all NCBs under the terms of INTERPOL's Constitution and the RPD. Consequently, in partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism and INTERPOL, the USNCB's International Capacity Building Programme is working to provide partner countries with the hardware, software, and technical expertise required to implement

the integrated information sharing and screening measures in operation in the United States today.

Of critical importance, the implementation of the solutions pioneered by the USNCB is opening a channel to actionable criminal investigative intelligence and information developed by our international counterparts regarding the identity, location, and movement of known and suspected threat actors. Thus, while at the same time increasing our partners' capacity to identify and respond to potential transnational threats, the use of these USNCB-developed solutions is producing information that redounds directly to the public safety and national security of the United States, directly underscoring the critical importance of the global information sharing capabilities available through INTERPOL.

The adoption of the USNCB's integrated information sharing model by a growing number of INTERPOL member countries is today helping deny transnational criminals and terrorists the mobility, anonymity, and safe haven they require in order to train and operate. Additionally, it has proven to be a proactive measure that is helping propel INTERPOL toward the realisation of the '*Global architecture of security*' articulated by Secretary General Jürgen Stock at the 2014 General Assembly in Monaco.

The Road That Lies Ahead

As stated in Article 2 of its Constitution, the aims of INTERPOL are '*to ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*', and '*to establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes*'.

To that end, INTERPOL has made many advances and had many successes throughout the first 100 years of its existence. But the work is far from done. As the threats from transnational crime and terrorism continue to evolve – and as we look with both optimism and concern at the potential that lies ahead with the use of technological developments that include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) – we must remain vigilant and adaptable in our law enforcement response. Now, more than ever, we must continue to work together, domestically and internationally, and remain committed to building strong partnerships, harnessing the power of ever-changing technology, and investing in our people to ensure that we can stay ahead of the growing number of threats we face today. We need to ensure that our INTERPOL organisation

remains faithful to its foundational principles of neutrality, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, by continuing to strengthen the governance of the organisation and ensuring strong leadership that values democracy.

At the USNCB, our success is due to our people, the true backbone of our agency who, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year, work to ensure that we achieve our mission objectives. To them, I extend my heartfelt thanks. It is also on their behalf, as well as on behalf of the United States law enforcement community we serve, that I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our INTERPOL partners for their unwavering support and collaboration in the pursuit of effective international law enforcement cooperation. There is much that we have already accomplished, and I am confident that through INTERPOL we will continue to do so in the years to come.

Laws and Regulations

Code of Federal Regulations

INTERPOL's Rules on the Processing of Data

Reference of the article according to APA regulation

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People Smuggling in Hungarian Criminal Law



Gyula Gaál

PhD, Head of Office, senior police adviser,
police colonel
Baranya County Police Headquarters
gaalg@baranya.police.hu



Abstract

Aim: By providing a detailed analysis of the current legal framework for smuggling of human beings, the study may help to improve the practical application of the law.

Methodology: The study presents, describes and interprets the legal definition of the crime of people smuggling.

Findings: In Hungarian criminal law, the regulation of the offence of people smuggling is part of a permanent legislative process, which cannot be completed even today. The legislator, based on the principle of protection of society, has criminalised the activity of people smuggling as human behaviour dangerous to society and provides for a penalty to be imposed on persons committing this crime.

Value: The value of the study is that, by presenting Hungarian criminal legislation, it can serve as an example for other states.

Keywords: people smuggling, financial gain, criminal law, state border

Introduction

In the process of Hungarian legislation, people smuggling as a *sui generis* crime was regulated in the Criminal Code in the middle of the 20th century. The legislator classified the form of facilitating illegal border crossing as an independent crime and penalised it more severely than the offence from which it originated.

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Criminal Law Interpretation of People Smuggling

People smuggling first appeared as a separate offence against public safety in section 204 of Act V of 1961. The reason for making it an autonomous offence is that facilitating an illegal border crossing is more dangerous to society than the illegal border crossing itself, since on the one hand there is a risk of further criminal activity on the part of the abettor and on the other hand the person who engages in such conduct usually obtains substantial unlawful benefits without performing socially useful work (Földvári, 1972).

The definition of people smuggling has changed several times over the past decades. The new Criminal Code, promulgated by Act C of 2012, entered into force on 1 July 2013 and included people smuggling among the offences against the rules of public administration.

Act CXL of 2015, which was enacted in response to mass immigration, ensures the ordered conditions at Hungary's state border by introducing three new offences into the Criminal Code (illegal crossing of a border barrier: Section 352/A, damaging a border barrier: Section 352/B and obstruction of the construction work related to a border barrier: Section 352/C).

Furthermore, the Act, which entered into force on 15 September 2015, has significantly aggravated both the basic and the qualified cases of people smuggling. *'Section 353 (1) Any person who assists another person to cross a state border in violation of the provisions of law shall be punished for the offence by imprisonment for a term of one to five years.*

- (2) The punishment shall be imprisonment for a term of two to eight years if the people smuggling is committed*
 - a) for pecuniary gain,*
 - b) assisting several persons in crossing a state border, or*
 - c) by destroying or damaging a facility or means for the protection of the legal order at the state border.*
- (3) The penalty shall be imprisonment for a term of five to ten years if the people smuggling is committed*
 - a) by tormenting the smuggled person,*
 - b) armed,*
 - c) carrying a deadly weapon,*
 - d) in a business-like manner or*
 - e) in a criminal conspiracy.*
- (4) The penalty shall be imprisonment for a term of five to fifteen years if*
 - a) the people smuggling within the meaning of paragraph (3)(a) is committed in the manner set out in paragraphs (b) to (e)*

- b) the people smuggling within the meaning of paragraph (3)(b) is committed in the manner set out in paragraphs (a) or c) to (e).*
- (5) The person organising or controlling the offence under subsection (3) or (4) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term of ten to twenty years.*
- (6) Whoever commits preparation for people smuggling shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of up to three years.’ (Criminal Code)*

The legal object of the offence is the state’s interest in the inviolability of the state border and the enforcement of border policing regulations, so that everyone should cross the state border only if they meet the conditions (authorisation) laid down by law or an international treaty.

The conditions for crossing the state border are regulated partly by an international treaty, the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement, and partly by Hungarian law, namely Act LXXXIX of 2007 on the state borders and Act II of 2007 on the entry and residence of third-country nationals.

The state border defines the area of state sovereignty, within which the state exercises its unlimited and indivisible supreme power. The territory of Hungary is delimited by a set of imaginary planes passing vertically through the surface of the Earth (hereinafter referred to as the ‘state border’). The line of the state border on the surface of the Earth is defined by international treaties, which must be promulgated by law.¹ The border line is the intersection of the state border and the surface of the Earth.² The border of Hungary is marked by border markers placed on the terrain.

The wrongful conduct in question is assisting another person to cross the state border in violation of the provisions of the law, i.e., aiding and abetting and is a criminal offence under section 14(2) of the Criminal Code. The legislator regulates the act of the abettor related to the minor offence of illegal border crossing as a separate delict because of its increased danger to society.

Assistance is any conduct that may be used to establish aiding and abetting. Assistance may be physical or psychological. For example, physical assistance is when the offender transports the person intending to cross the border to a point near the state border or when this person reports for crossing at the border crossing point hidden in the abettor’s vehicle. Psychological assistance is for example the provision of appropriate information, advice or guidance to the person planning to cross the border illegally.

1 Act LXXXIX. of 2007 on the state border, Section 1, subsections (1)-(2).

2 Act LXXXIX. of 2007 on the state border, Section 1, subsection (3).

The wrongful conduct can only be an active performance. It can be accomplished by crossing the state border either by entering or by exiting a country. The legal fact is such that it is irrelevant which country's border is crossed.

Anyone who assists a third-country national who does not hold a valid travel document authorising him to cross a state border to enter another Schengen Member State commits the crime of people smuggling, regardless of whether or not there is border control at this 'internal' border.³ The smuggling of human beings is completed when the offence is committed, irrespective of whether the border was actually crossed or of how far the assistance was provided from the border (Erdősy et al., 2002).

An attempt to commit this offence can be established if the offender has already contacted the persons concerned for the purpose specified in the law but has not yet provided further assistance (Belovics et al., 2002).

Anyone can be a subject of this offence. There is also no obstacle to establishing complicity if several persons, knowing of each other's activities and complementing each other's activities, assist somebody in crossing the state border illegally.

In principle, there is also no obstacle to establishing incitement. Such a qualification may be made if someone persuades the person providing the assistance to assist in the above manner. The instigator must of course also know how the border was (is going to be) crossed (Erdősy et al., 2002).

The offence can only be committed intentionally. The perpetrator must be aware of all the objective elements of the offence, i.e. a person or several persons intend to cross the border of any country unlawfully, and he or she assists in this by his or her conduct.

The offence comprises eleven qualifying circumstances altogether, at four levels of seriousness (CC 353. §).

- The aggravated case referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is the offence of intent to obtain property gain, in the light of which this aggravated offence may be committed with direct intent. In the case of people smuggling, intent to obtain property gain includes any activity aimed at enrichment, whether it is the demand for active property or the reduction of passive property. An intent to obtain property gain can be established where the offender provides assistance in return for financial consideration or benefit, or in exchange for the remission of a debt. However, its actual acquisition is not necessary for the commission of the completed offence. It is irrelevant for the establishment of the offence whether the material benefit was actually obtained.

3 Curia of Hungary ruling in principle regarding criminal law No. 14/2013.

- Paragraph (2)(b) establishes a single criminal offence (*delictum complexum*) for the case where the offender accomplishes people smuggling by assisting several persons to cross the state border. This qualifying circumstance is met if at least two persons are assisted in crossing the border illegally. Where the offender assists several persons to cross the state border, a single count offence shall be established as defined in this paragraph, rather than a multiple counts offence.
- A qualified case within the meaning of paragraph (2)(c) is an offence committed by destroying or damaging a facility or means for the protection of ordered conditions at the state border. According to section 5 subsection (1) of Act LXXXIX of 2007 on the state border, *'the 60-metre strip of the territory of Hungary from the border line or border marker marking the external border as defined by Article 2 paragraph (2) of the Community Code may be used for the construction, installation and operation of facilities ensuring the protection of ordered conditions at the state border, including facilities pursuant to section 15/A, and for the performance of defence, national security, disaster management, border surveillance, asylum and aliens policing tasks pursuant to this Act.'*
- The cases punishable more severely are set out in subsection 3. Paragraph (3)(a) covers the offender who commits the offence of people smuggling by tormenting the smuggled person. The offence is committed by tormenting if the offence causes the smuggled person physical or mental suffering or distress. This includes starvation, deprivation of water or liquids, keeping somebody in inhumane conditions such as in a dark, unheated room, threats to life, or communication of untrue information about relatives which is likely to cause terror or grief.
- Under subsection 3, paragraph (b), an offence committed with a weapon is similarly serious. Section 459 subsection (1) paragraph (5) of the Criminal Code provides that an offence is committed by an armed person if he possesses a functioning firearm, explosive material, blasting agent or a device intended for the use of a blasting agent. The provisions relating to armed offences shall also apply where the offence is committed by threatening with the imitation of any of the foregoing. The definition of a firearm is laid down in section 2 subsection (16) of Act XXIV of 2004 on firearms and ammunition, which defines a firearm as a gun or an air weapon from which a solid projectile with muzzle energy of more than 7.5 joules can be discharged. Explosive material shall mean any substance, mixture or compound specially produced for the purpose, which, under the action of any mechanical, thermal, electrical, chemical action or signal, is transformed

in a very short time by the application of intense heat, light, sound, pressure or tension, and thus produces a destructive effect. A blasting agent is a substance or mixture of substances which stores a very large amount of chemical energy and is capable of releasing a large amount of energy in a very short time during combustion, i.e., of exploding.

- Under paragraph (3)(c), offences committed while carrying a deadly weapon are also punishable as serious offences. Section 459 subsection (1) paragraph (6) of the Criminal Code provides that a person who possesses an instrument capable of taking life in order to overcome or prevent resistance commits this offence.
- Paragraph (3)(d) assesses the offence committed in a business-like manner in the same way as in the previous cases. The concept of business-like conduct is defined in section 459 subsection (1) paragraph (28) of the Criminal Code, according to which a person who seeks to obtain a regular profit by committing the same or similar offences commits an offence in a business-like manner. According to judicial practice, people smuggling is committed in a business-like manner if the offender commits the offence as a member of an organisation formed for this purpose, albeit for the first time.
- Paragraph (3)(e) criminalises committing the offence in conspiracy. According to section 459 subsection (1) paragraph (2) of the Criminal Code, a criminal conspiracy is formed when two or more persons commit or agree to commit criminal offences in an organised manner and attempt to commit at least one criminal offence, but no criminal organisation is formed.
- Pursuant to paragraph (4)(a) the offence of people smuggling completed by tormenting the smuggled person shall be punishable with an even more severe penalty if committed armed, carrying a deadly weapon, in a business-like manner or in a criminal conspiracy.
- Paragraph (4)(b) assesses armed people smuggling in the same way as in the previous cases, if it is carried out by tormenting the smuggled person, carrying a deadly weapon, in a business-like manner or in criminal conspiracy.
- Under subsection (5), the most serious punishment shall be imposed on the organiser or controller of the offence of people smuggling.

The preparation for people smuggling is also punishable, so it applies to anyone who, with a view to committing the offence, provides the necessary or facilitating conditions, invites, offers, undertakes or agrees to commit the offence jointly. Preparation for people smuggling, as defined in both the basic and the qualified cases, is subject to punishment. According to judicial practice, a person who undertakes to escort others across the state border (but these persons

are apprehended when attempting to cross the border illegally) is a person who performs the preparations for people smuggling.

As a supplementary punishment, expulsion may also be imposed under section 364 of the Criminal Code. Under section 57 of the Criminal Code, in cases provided for by law, a person whose presence there endangers the public interest may be expelled from one or more settlements or from a specified part of a settlement or of the country. The shortest duration of the expulsion is one year and the longest is five years. As a supplementary punishment, the expulsion restricts the offender's right to choose his place of residence. There are two main limits to the application of the expulsion. Firstly, it can be used as a secondary punishment only for certain offences defined by law. The other significant limitation is that it cannot be imposed as a secondary punishment to punishments other than imprisonment. The imprisonment does not necessarily have to be enforceable; the expulsion may be imposed in addition to a suspended custodial sentence.

Regarding single or multiple counts issues, people smuggling can be cumulated with other offences, such as the offence of forgery of documents.

The offence is cumulative if the assistance constitutes an offence other than smuggling of human beings, for example, the offences of falsifying a passport for the purpose of facilitating the departure of a person abroad for consideration, the offences of bribery of a public official in breach of duty and of forgery of a document by a public official, will also be qualified as people smuggling if the person has left the country using the falsified passport.

If the smuggled person dies or suffers bodily injury in the course of the smuggling, depending on the offence, the cumulative offence of intentional or negligent homicide or bodily harm may be established together with the basic case of people smuggling.

People smuggling is distinguished from the facilitation of unlawful stay (Criminal Code, section 354). While the latter is committed for property gain, only for the purpose of unlawful stay in the country, but does not in any way facilitate entry, people smuggling, which does not in principle involve property gain, not only facilitates stay in the country, but also the crossing of the state border, either on the entry or the exit side, in an illegal or unauthorised manner. The offender's act may also facilitate the unlawful crossing of the border by a person whose stay in the country is not otherwise unlawful.

Summary

In Hungarian criminal law, the regulation of people smuggling is part of a permanent legislative process, which cannot be concluded at present. Based on the principle of the protection of society, the legislator has criminalised the activity of people smuggling, an act subject to punishment as a human behaviour dangerous to society.

This migration-based illegal activity should be expected in the coming years. The fight against people smuggling requires not only a strong legal framework, but also more coordinated and effective international cooperation, including systematic security checks by EU Member States against relevant databases, in particular SIS II, INTERPOL, VIS and the national police databases, with the support of Frontex and Europol.⁴

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4 See the Council of the European Union conclusions on trafficking in human beings of 10 March 2016.

INTERPOL's Contribution and Prospective Roles in Tackling Migrant Smuggling Concerning Europe and Wider Area



Ciprian-Vasile Maftai

Dr, Home Affairs Attaché
Embassy of Romania to Hungary
mafteimcv@yahoo.com

Abstract

Illegal migration is a major ongoing crisis affecting Europe, but, also, a global one. While the causes determining people to leave their habitat are diverse (violent conflicts, social unrest, economic problems, effects of the climate change and so on), what is obvious is that the migrant smugglers ruthlessly try to take advantage on their plight for profit purposes. In this regard, INTERPOL's assistance to the national authorities, as well as its cooperation with other international organisations and agencies operating in the field of law enforcement cooperation, in countering migrant smuggling, is hugely important. As migrant trafficking is one of the driving forces of illegal migration, in the author's opinion, in order to better counter the complex migrant smuggling networks, it would be needed a more comprehensive, targeted and tailored approach meant to facilitate simultaneous, quicker and coordinated operations in multiple jurisdictions.

Aim: To describe the contribution of trafficking in migrants to the exacerbation of illegal migration, the role of INTERPOL in assisting European Union and its relevant agencies, as well as to contemplate to new ideas leading to solutions meant to tackle more effectively this scourge.

Methodology: Having a solid experience in combating migrant smuggling, both at the operational and strategic level, as well as in the field of international Police cooperation, the Author, using both an empirical and a descriptive approach, tries to highlight the main elements of the problem based on which to contribute to a debate aimed at finding ideas and solutions for improving the efficiency of the fight against this criminal phenomenon, concerning the European continent and a wider area.

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Findings: The migrant smuggling networks are intrinsically connected to the phenomenon of illegal migration, looking to exploit its causes and take advantage on people's vulnerabilities. These networks, which could be very dynamic and complex, easily spreads and infiltrates across national jurisdictions, requiring a strong response on behalf of the law enforcement agencies, which cannot be effective enough without ensuring a solid, smart and flexible international cooperation process, both at strategic and practical level. In this respect, INTERPOL's role, alongside its partners at European and global level is essential. **Value:** The author's purpose is that of describing the complexity and the implications of migrant smuggling on Europe, as well as to propose a more pragmatic, tailored and coordinated approach for fighting this phenomenon.

Keywords: illegal migration, migrant smuggling, criminal networks, international cooperation

INTERPOL – From Inception to Creation and Achieving an Utmost Importance

The initiative of Prince Albert I of Monaco in 1914, subsequently revived in 1923 by Dr Johannes Schober, then the President of Vienna Police, laid the foundations of INTERPOL,¹ which became one of the most important and respected international organisations, recognised formally as such by United Nations in 1972 ([URL1](#)).

Based on its Constitution adopted in 1956, and subsequently amended so as to keep the pace with the changing realities, INTERPOL does not represent just a formidable organisation for Police cooperation, but, also, contributes to shaping a common Police culture across the world, contributing essentially to the global security, by excluding political interferences and, ultimately, pursuing the protection and safety of individuals, their integrity, property and dignity.

Without INTERPOL, it is hard to imagine how prevention and fighting transnational and organised crime would be possible. Through a comprehensive and resilient approach, involving not only Police entities of its Member States, but, also, intergovernmental and non-governmental international organisations,² INTERPOL shows that impunity cannot be achieved by fleeing to other countries or even continents and the law enforcement's response does not stop at the border.

1 International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL.

2 Art. 41 (Constitution of ICPO-INTERPOL).

An indispensable feature of any modern Police force is its adaptability and capacity to permanently find efficient solutions for tackling the continuously evolving criminal phenomena, especially the most serious ones affecting multiple jurisdictions, as for example: drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, migrant smuggling, firearm trafficking, cybercrime, terrorism (URL2) etc. In this regard, INTERPOL brings an important contribution, by ensuring a fast and efficient communication, building trust and promoting cooperation among Police forces, developing tailored instruments and techniques which are made available to its members and partners, as for example: capacity building, coordination capabilities, intelligence analysis, access to databases, border management, change management tools.

As member of INTERPOL, a Police force *'will never walk alone'*.³

The Trap of Migrant Smuggling: Profiteering of Vulnerable Ones

I chose migrant smuggling as the main subject of my article from a number of reasons related to my professional experience and the tremendous effects of this phenomenon to Europe and wider region.

2015 – more than 1 million people crossed into Europe igniting a humanitarian and a long-term political crisis which still divides European Union and Europe in its entirety (URL3). On that occasion some new reference terms emerged, which taken out of context could be imagined as elements of a touristic guide: Western Balkan route, Mediterranean routes etc., which instead symbolise misery, vain hopes, disagreement, political clashes and so on.

The first major political crisis of this kind proved to be a shock for European Union with divisive effects that are still felt today, which moreover seems to exacerbate and get new sordid facets, as for example political tools sometimes meant both for external and internal purposes.

From my perspective, migrant smuggling is one of the main driving forces of illegal migration, a versatile phenomenon, capable to blur the lines between the root causes of displacements and to take rapidly advantage of any opportunity which could increase its efficiency as a whole, but, also, related to its integral elements: advertisement and recruitment, transportation, evading border controls and protection, circulating money, ensuring smugglers' anonymity etc. Through its amplitude and complexity, migrant smuggling is likely to dramatically affect

3 'You'll never walk alone' – Anthem of Liverpool Football Club (a song by Gerry & The Pacemakers).

the effectiveness of ‘classical’ measures to combat illegal migration, including border security, ‘fences’ or asylum policies, no matter how good they may be.

By using sophisticated methods, often employing technological instruments, the smugglers pursue to transport migrants from an origin country to a destination state for financial gains and will continue and develop their activities as long as their networks remain functional. The smugglers have no legal or moral standards or restrictions, as their only goal is simply lucrative. In this respect, they will use any opportunity which may arise and take advantage of any vulnerability of law enforcement authorities. As for example, the criminals can instantly communicate and cooperate among themselves using the newest technological means which often offer them even the possibility to go undetected (for example, online games platforms) and move money ‘under the radar’ (for example, using Hawala system) (URL4). At the same time, the law enforcement authorities, including their international cooperation, are tied to regulations, law and agreements etc. which limit the flexibility and real time reaction of their actions and put them in a disadvantageous situation comparing to criminals.

Once the migrants arrive at their supposed destination or are detected in a transitory state, the smugglers’ ‘job’ is done, and the burden of the smuggled persons is taken over by the authorities of the states in question. At this point, we are in the position to contemplate at what it could have been done for preventing this situation and, more important, to learn lessons for improving our reactive and proactive capabilities for tackling and disrupting this phenomenon.

Taking a view on Europe, especially on European Union and Schengen area, in my opinion, preventing illegal entries by means of border security, removing illegal migrants from the EU territory and so on cannot be reasonably effective without an integrated, tailored and comprehensive approach at international level to the phenomenon of migrant smuggling, simply because, with the contribution of migrant smugglers, many of those individuals who fail to enter the EU or, who are returned, will try again, and, in addition, they will be joined by others, permanently increasing the pressure.

Illegal migration, a phenomenon which, since 2010, has been exacerbated by events and movements in the Middle East and, more recently in Ukraine, is one of the greatest challenges which EU is facing, its complexity and, above all, the difficulty of identifying and implementing effective solutions causing considerable dissension within the Community bloc. And, as I have already said, migrant smuggling proves to be an intrinsic element of illegal migration and at its core stays the complex smuggling networks which spread from the origin up to the destination countries.

A conclusive image of the functioning of migrant smuggling networks and, at the same time, a school-case with many lessons-learned to draw from it, is the migration crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border from 2021–2022, when the role of recruiters (including travel agencies or other entities) was very clear in influencing people’s decisions to sell their life savings and go into debt in order to migrate to Europe. Many of the migrants, misled by recruiters, arrived in Belarus from Iraqi Kurdistan with the aim of forcing their way into the European Union in search of a better life.

According to a survey conducted by International Organization for Migration among the Iraqi returnees who returned from Belarus and neighbouring countries during the Belarusian migration crisis in 2021–22 (URL5), *‘over a half of the respondents (they stated) received some form of help to migrate (64%). Of these, most received assistance from family or friends (58%), with 41% also reporting using a people smuggler and 38% reporting travel being facilitated by a travel agent.’*

‘Of those that received assistance from smugglers and travel agents, most found information about their services through word of mouth (68%), (...) a third using social media to gather information (29%). In community discussions, word of mouth and social media were identified by participants as the two primary sources of information on irregular migration routes, smugglers and travel agents. (...) Smugglers are also reportedly using social media platforms to share information on irregular migration routes to Europe and promote their services. Social media platforms specified (...) as sources of information included TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and Viber. Around 70% of survey respondents borrowed money to fund their attempted migration, although they did so almost exclusively from family and friends (93% of all those that borrowed money). Half of respondents drew upon savings to pay for the journey (53%) and/or sold assets such as their house, land, cars or furniture.’

As deceived by recruiters and the stories sold by them, many people could fall in a trap which may ruin their lives, instead of leading them towards a promise land. Many chose to spend all they have or all their families have to finance their trip to Europe. As long as they got money, the smuggling networks would help them, then they are on their own.

In 2014, before the migration crisis which ignited the following year, during my tenure as Home Affairs Attaché in Dublin, I attended a conference (held under the Chatham House rule) where an EU official at the time was asked about the causes of illegal migration, especially from areas not directly or immediately affected by a violent conflict. He answered under the form of an impromptu example which made a part of the audience leave the room ‘in

dismay': *In a village in Africa someone gets a TV, an antenna and a generator and, among other things, the community members can see 'the wonder of life' in Europe. Then an individual comes along and tells them he could help them, in exchange of money, of course, to reach the old continent, where they would have a better life and would be able to send money to those back home. The family sells their livestock and chooses one of them to go on a journey that can change their lives.* At that time, I didn't think much of the subject, but later I better understood its essence.

As well, during a private trip I paid to Sarajevo in 2019, I was surprised when the owner of a restaurant told me that during the previous winter he had managed to survive thanks to the migrants in transit who used to visit his restaurant.

Migrant smuggling is a very lucrative, extremely well-organised business, and the efforts of the national authorities from the origin, transit and destination countries manage, even with the instruments offered by bilateral and multilateral international agreements, to break up only partially the migrant smuggling networks, while the organisers and ringleaders very often remains undetected and go unpunished.

In my opinion, in this nebula, the main victims of illegal migration are those who are most in need of protection and support from the international community, namely the refugees, who are directly and immediately affected by conflicts, conflagrations and repression, the majority of whom not having the material and financial means, the strength and the state of health to face the long journey towards the 'European dream'. Consequently, many of them even lose their lives in places such as the Mediterranean Sea. Lost in the complexity of illegal migration, the refugees are harder to identify and support.

As well, many of those (who, from certain points of view, could be classified as 'economic migrants') who are 'convinced' by false methods, means and information to embark on an uncertain journey to the 'European paradise' by paying important sums of money, do never reach their destination or are returned. Consequently, their lifetime savings or the money borrowed by them or by their families are lost, in many cases placing them in a state of dependence and servitude, which shows how close is migrant smuggling to trafficking in human beings.

As well as in case of other serious crimes, INTERPOL has brought an important contribution by assisting the law enforcement agencies around the world in fighting migrant smuggling by various means meant to increase their capacities *'to detect and investigate these crimes while protecting victims and vulnerable people'*, as for example by: facilitating Police cooperation and exchange of information; producing operational and static analysis reports to support law enforcement decision making; supporting transnational operations carried

out by its member countries; assisting the law enforcement authorities in developing their capacity; coordination of law enforcement specialised networks (for example, INTERPOL's Specialized Operational Network against Migrant Smuggling) (URL6).

INTERPOL's global operations in the field of combating migrant smuggling leads to identifying hundreds of criminals every year, by applying theoretical and practical tools, including training workshops, making use of its databases and expertise and cooperating with other various actors (URL7) including EU agencies (Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, CEPOL, eu-LISA) and EU institutions (European Parliament, European Council, European Commission, European External Action Service) (URL8).

INTERPOL is a key partner for European Union and its relevant agencies in the home affairs area, in fighting transnational crime and terrorism, based on a solid partnership meant to ensure that 'each party benefits fully from what the other can offer'. An important element of this cooperation is the Office of the Special Representatives of INTERPOL in Brussels, meant to facilitate a convergence between EU and global law enforcement initiatives and actions (URL9).

A major area of cooperation is fighting irregular migration and smuggling of migrants, by using various available legal and practical tools and putting forward initiatives meant to develop their capacities, including joint projects.

'Considering the complementarity of the tasks, objectives and responsibilities' INTERPOL and Europol concluded a strategic agreement in 2001 with the aim to *'establish and maintain cooperation (...) in combating serious forms of organised international crime'* (URL10; URL11).⁴ INTERPOL is contributing to the EU's Migrant Smuggling Centre (URL12), established by Europol in 2016. As well as this, INTERPOL established in 2018 'The Information Clearing House' to *'combat smuggling networks and enhance international partnerships between INTERPOL and EU agencies like Europol, Frontex and the European Union Asylum Agency'* (URL13).

At wider regional level, INTERPOL is working with EU in relation to supporting G5 Sahel Joint Force in effectively countering criminality, including people smuggling.

Another reflection of their commitment to enhance their cooperation is the interest of INTERPOL and its EU partners to explore options for developing an electronic system for transmitting Mutual Legal Assistance exchanges, which would considerably speed up the global communication process in this field.

4 Agreement between INTERPOL and Europol, signed on 5 November 2001.

As part of their solid partnership, EU contributes to funding some of INTERPOL's projects: Project IDEA, Project Shakara or The West African Police Information System etc. (URL14).

Strictly related to migrant smuggling and human trafficking, the European Union, its institutions and its members states have a major and direct interest in supporting and funding INTERPOL initiatives and projects concerning this area, as for example (URL15): '*Countering human trafficking and smuggling of migrants in the European Union*' (timeframe 2022–2023, funded by European Commission, budget 158,000 EUR), '*Countering human trafficking in the Balkans*' (time frame 2021–2023, funded by German Federal Foreign Office, budget 1,140,000 EUR), '*Fighting human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa*' (timeframe 2022–2024, funded by European Union, budget 642,000 EUR).

Looking for Ideas, Solutions, Opportunities...

I would like to stress the fact that my intention is not to provide an idea and endorse it as a panacea to the problem of migrant smuggling regarding Europe, but rather to ignite a larger debate in this direction which, ultimately, to lead to an indeed effective solution. Therefore, it is less important how wrong and flawed my opinions might be, since attracting criticism on them is, in fact, a part of the plan.

At European level, the ongoing dilemma on the most appropriate and effective ways of managing and alleviating illegal migration has created dissensions among EU Member States, with some being more in favour of stopping the flow, including by building border fences, and others considering solidarity in accepting migrants etc. as the main way forward.

It is not easy to identify a single 'magic' solution, but, personally, I am convinced that illegal migration could be limited by tackling the migrant smuggling through a dedicated, tailored and comprehensive approach, at regional and even global level, with INTERPOL holding an important role.

In this regard, from my perspective, with the aim to tackle and prevent migrant smuggling in a unified and coordinated manner, such a solution could be achieved under the form of a permanent taskforce or international cooperation centre.

Such a Centre would comprise liaison officers, with sound expertise in fighting trafficking in migrants (police officers and prosecutors) and, if needed representatives of other relevant institutions from the concerned countries (destination, transit and origin), as well as from relevant EU institutions and agencies, INTERPOL and other international law enforcement fora.

Since the most interested parties are European Union and its Member States, the Centre would be primarily financed by and work under the aegis of EU based on a multilateral status and/or working agreements concluded with the participating parties, with a fix-term renewable mandate.⁵

From my point of view, for practical reasons, a feasible solution would be for the Centre to be headquartered in an EU state located in the proximity of the main migratory routes and/or at the Union's external border.⁶ At first, in order to assess its feasibility, a task-force could be set up as a pilot project for a limited period of time, comprising several countries which are on or in the vicinity of Western Balkan route.

The main scope of the Centre would be focused on information exchange, police/judicial cooperation and operational coordination.

Regarding the information exchange, Europol and INTERPOL would play a central and strategic role, by making use of their tools and mechanism, including their information analysis capabilities, which could be essential for example regarding the decision-making process. Of course, in punctual cases, the intelligence could be exchanged, as well, through liaison officers.

The Centre could, also, assist EU and the law enforcement authorities from the concerned states to carry out an 'inventory' of the phenomenon, to agree on a comprehensive 'battle plan' and prioritise their actions in accordance to their common interest and the changing realities.

In respect of facilitation and coordination of joint operations and investigative activities within the jurisdictions of the states which would adhere to the Centre, I believe this would be the essence of the Centre and the area where it could contribute the most to the efforts of fighting against migrant smuggling networks.

It would be of a tremendous importance in succeeding to dismantle as many as possible networks of trafficking in migrants, by achieving the possibility to initiate, deploy and carry out joint complex operations in different jurisdictions simultaneously or in a very short period of time, in a speedy, coordinated and integrated manner.

As a practical example, we could imagine the ideal situation when by merely starting from a transporter or a guide,⁷ the law enforcement authorities could easily investigate and follow the thread and successfully dismantle a network which spreads his tentacles from Middle East to Western Union, including by reaching to the main kingpins and organisers.

5 A possible name suggested by the author could be: 'Centre for International Cooperation against Trafficking in Migrants' (possible acronym CENTRAMIG), hereinafter referred to as the Centre.

6 For example, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria etc.

7 For example, apprehended in Hungary, Austria or Germany.

By using its expertise, tools, mechanism and networks described above, INTERPOL would have a very important role in the functioning of such a Centre, including by providing assistance in liaising and cooperation at global and regional level.

One of the most valuable lessons I got from my professional activity is the importance of personal contacts and direct cooperation, including at operational level, in the world of international law enforcement cooperation, whose relevance could be particularly obvious in those cases affecting multiple jurisdictions, in this respect migrants smuggling being a perfect example.

Thus, by building trust and making possible a convergence between different national criminal procedural legislations and procedures, the main aim of direct cooperation is to ensure a timely and effective response and action, so as to keep the pace with the developments and progress of criminal activities, which have few restrictions except of those imposed by law enforcement.

In addition to the operational scope of the Centre, the data, information and the facts collected during the operational activities in different jurisdictions could be capitalised for developing an efficient mechanism of prevention and awareness raising regarding the traps of migrant smuggling, focused mainly on the origin and transit countries and the recruitment phase, which is the first segment of the criminal chain. Once the recruitment stage is 'burnt', the migration process is very difficult to stop or divert, often with no way back for those who have invested everything they have to pay the traffickers. These activities could be realised, for example by advising, mentoring and providing financial support to the relevant authorities from the concerned countries in order to strengthen their legal and practical framework so as to achieve better capacities for prevention through awareness campaigns, taking advantage of all available opportunities: outreach in the field, online activities, etc.

The data and aspects resulting from the work of the Centre, could be used, as well, to assist EU and other international organisations and actors in focusing their efforts to support and facilitate the reconstruction, social and economic development of origin countries or attenuating the effects of climate changes, which would have beneficial effects for both countries of origin, transit and destination.

Online links in the article

- URL1: *Key dates*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/INTERPOL-100/Key-dates>
- URL2: *What is INTERPOL*. <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/What-is-INTERPOL>
- URL3: *Europe's migrant crisis: The year that changed a continent*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53925209>
- URL4: *Hawala. How does this informal funds transfer system work, and should it be regulated?* <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/12/elqorchi.htm>
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The Possible Response of Science to the Global Threat



József Németh

PhD, President, Head of Department, honorary associate professor, police commissioner, police colonel
Police Education and Training Centre,
Police Scientific Council
nemethj@rokk.police.hu



Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study is to present the innovations in INTERPOL's activities and practices and the need for them.

Methodology: The author analyses and systematises the literature in Hungarian and English, as well as the articles and data published on the INTERPOL website on the occasion of the anniversary.

Findings: The security challenges and the fight against international organised crime require innovation in the work of law enforcement agencies, and the use and application of the results of technological progress.

Value: The study examines possible responses to global challenges from a research and development-innovation perspective, in particular in relation to INTERPOL's activities and possible practices at home.

Keywords: security, research-development-innovation, INTERPOL

The creation and maintenance of complex security is a global challenge that knows no borders and that nations alone cannot address effectively and sustainably. Only prepared, science-based organisations can meet the challenges of the 21st century. INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, has been playing an important role in international law enforcement for a century. Recognising the challenges of exponential development, INTERPOL has adapted to meet the challenges of crime prevention, detection and investigation by embracing innovation. An analysis of its journey towards innovation reveals that the organisation has become a key player in the fight against transnational

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crime in the modern era. The need for research, development and innovation has also become part of the practice of the domestic police profession, with a history going back decades.

Introduction

INTERPOL, short for International Criminal Police Organization, has been at the forefront of international law enforcement since its creation in 1923. Over the decades, INTERPOL has evolved and adapted to changing global dynamics, emerging threats and technological advances. Today it is a symbol of innovation and international cooperation in the fight against transnational crime. In this paper, I will present, in a non-exhaustive manner, INTERPOL's innovative initiatives and their far-reaching impact on global law enforcement, as well as possible future directions for domestic law enforcement research and innovation.

Innovation in Technology

Global Law Enforcement Communication

One of INTERPOL's most significant technological innovations is the global law enforcement communication system known as I-24/7. Launched in 1999, I-24/7 is a secure and encrypted platform that allows law enforcement agencies from INTERPOL Member States to communicate and share critical information in real time. This platform provides law enforcement officials with access to INTERPOL's extensive criminal databases containing information on criminals, stolen property, missing persons and terrorism-related data ([URL1](#)).

I-24/7 revolutionised the speed and efficiency of law enforcement cooperation in cross-border cases. For example, it allows police officers in one country to request information about a suspect or criminal record in another country almost instantly. This real-time exchange of data has played and continues to play an important role in the search for fugitives and missing persons, and in the prevention of international crime ([URL1](#)).

Expertise in cybercrime

The rise of cybercrime in recent years has posed a major challenge to law enforcement agencies worldwide. Recognising the need to effectively combat

cyber threats, INTERPOL has also invested in building expertise in this area. The organisation has set up a dedicated unit, the Interpol Global Cybercrime Expert Group (IGCEG), which is composed of experts in cybersecurity, digital forensics and related fields ([URL2](#)).

The IGCEG provides technical support and guidance to member countries to investigate cybercrime. In addition, as the INTERPOL Cyber Fusion Centre, it contributes to sharing intelligence on cyber threats and coordinating global responses to cyber incidents ([URL3](#)). INTERPOL's commitment to fighting cybercrime underpins its recognition of the changing nature of criminal activity and the need for cutting-edge technological solutions.

Information Sharing

Criminal Databases

INTERPOL manages a wide range of criminal databases that facilitate international cooperation in law enforcement. These databases contain information on various criminal activities, including drug and human trafficking, terrorism and organised crime. The possibility to access and contribute to these databases has changed the way member countries operate.

For example, INTERPOL's Stolen Motor Vehicles database allows law enforcement agencies to check whether a vehicle has been stolen by simply inserting the information. This has been invaluable in preventing the illegal trafficking of stolen vehicles and recovering stolen property ([URL4](#)). In addition, databases on missing persons and child exploitation have helped reunite families and protect vulnerable people from exploitation ([URL1](#)).

Data Analysis and Predictive Policing

In recent years, INTERPOL has used data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse the vast amount of law enforcement data. Through initiatives such as the INTERPOL Innovation Centre, the organisation is developing AI tools to support member countries in detecting and predicting crime and patterns ([URL5](#)). These technologies enable law enforcement agencies to be proactive in preventing and responding to threats.

In addition, INTERPOL's data analysis methods also help to identify emerging trends and the way criminal organisations operate. This information helps member countries to readapt their strategies and allocate resources more efficiently

([URL6](#)). The predictive policing capabilities offered by these innovations will contribute to enhanced public safety and crime reduction at a global level.

Developing Capacity

INTERPOL recognises that its impact goes beyond technology and databases, it also lies in strengthening the capabilities of law enforcement agencies in member countries. To achieve this, INTERPOL offers a range of capacity building programmes and training initiatives.

Specialised Training

INTERPOL runs special training programmes to equip law enforcement officials with the knowledge and skills needed to fight various forms of crime. These programmes cover areas such as counterterrorism, cybercrime, drug trafficking, human smuggling and wildlife crime ([URL7](#)). By providing access to world-class trainings, INTERPOL ensures that member countries' law enforcement agencies are well prepared to deal with complex and evolving threats.

Technical Support

In addition to training, INTERPOL also offers technical support to member countries facing special challenges. This can include sending experts to help with a complex investigation or providing resources to improve a country's forensic capacities ([URL8](#)). By customising its support to the specific needs of each member country, INTERPOL helps to bridge capability gaps and provide a more effective response to transnational crime.

International Cooperation

INTERPOL's strength lies in its ability to facilitate international cooperation between law enforcement agencies. It serves as a neutral and trusted intermediary for member countries, enabling them to cooperate in cases that cross national borders.

Common Operations

INTERPOL often coordinates common operations involving several Member States and targeting specific crimes. For example, Operation Thunderstorm in 2018 was a global initiative to combat wildlife trafficking. It led to the arrest of hundreds of individuals and the seizure of several tonnes of illegal wildlife products ([URL9](#)). Such operations harness the collective resources and expertise of member countries to achieve effective results.

Partnerships

INTERPOL also works with various international organisations, such as the United Nations, the World Customs Organization and regional law enforcement networks. These partnerships provide a more comprehensive and coordinated response to global challenges. For example, INTERPOL works closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime ([URL10](#)).

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Although INTERPOL's innovative approaches have played a significant role in advancing global law enforcement, they also present challenges and ethical considerations. A primary concern is the potential for misuse of technology and information sharing. Protecting the privacy of individuals and preventing unauthorised access to sensitive data is of paramount importance.

In addition, INTERPOL operates in a complex geopolitical environment, where the interests of its member countries do not always coincide. Balancing the promotion of international cooperation with respect for national sovereignty can be a challenge. Ensuring that INTERPOL remains impartial and free from political influence is essential for the credibility and effectiveness of the organisation.

In addition, the rapid evolution of technology presents ongoing challenges in keeping up with evolving cyber threats and ensuring the security of sensitive law enforcement data. Cyber security and data protection must be a top priority to prevent violations and unauthorised access.

Conclusions

INTERPOL's commitment to innovation has made it a leading player in the global fight against international crime. Through technological advances, information sharing, capacity building and international cooperation, INTERPOL has adapted to the ever-changing environment of criminal activity. Its commitment to cutting edge solutions has enabled member countries to combat crime more effectively and protect their citizens more efficiently.

Despite this, INTERPOL faces ongoing challenges, including ethical considerations related to data protection and political influence. To maintain its integrity and effectiveness, INTERPOL must continue to prioritise transparency, accountability and international cooperation.

Innovation in Domestic Practice

In Hungary, scientific activity in the police organisation is basically determined by the relevant internal affairs and police norms, providing an opportunity and an organisational framework for scientific thinking in order to ensure that police activity has an appropriate scientific background and basis. There has been a significant change in police science research since 2014, mainly thanks to proposals for EU Horizon 2020 funding with the participation of police professional organisations.

With the changes in the system of EU and national R&D and innovation funding, it is necessary to rethink the tasks, competences and responsibilities of the organisations responsible for carrying out research, especially professional project organisations, and the status of cooperation, which can be done as follows.

Potential Directions for the Future

The above regulatory documents are effective in promoting social science research, theoretical and human resource development, but further steps are needed in the field of technological research and development, for the following reasons:

- The explosive development of technologies makes it inevitable that a technological solution is tested, the possibilities explored and improved in order to prevent and react in time to any possible misuse by the police;
- This type of research is multi-disciplinary, has a heavy administrative burden, is costly and organisationally demanding, but also requires a rapid organisational response that requires a flexible structure;

- The organisational elements currently in place at the police for tendering and project support were created primarily for equipment procurement, and for them the administrative burden of participating in a type of project where many small procurements and service orders are typical (individual equipment, prototypes, a trip abroad) is disproportionate;
- Some of the potential financial resources require the involvement of market players, the expected outcome is usually a product or solution at a certain level of technological maturity;
- The police have the professional police knowledge and practical experience that can form the basis for the development of such products and solutions, for which the activities of the Police Scientific Council are well suited to gathering and reflecting user needs in this respect ([URL11](#));
- Organisations at the forefront of international security research (research institutes, universities, police forces) recognise the high professional standards of the Hungarian police and count on their participation;
- The University of Public Service, in cooperation with the police, has the organisational conditions and the professional police and civilian staff, well qualified in research methodology, to mediate between research and development and the professional needs of the police.

Different models have been developed for running law enforcement and security techniques research in the EU Member States. These models have been adapted partly to the administrative structure of the state concerned and partly to the specific research and development programmes.

Research Infrastructure

In Hungary, with the policy support of the former Ministry of Innovation and Technology, the National Laboratories Programme ([URL12](#)) has been set up to encourage closer cooperation between national laboratories in a given scientific field, to develop competences that can respond to major global problems at international level and to create opportunities for effective knowledge transfer.

With the effective support of the police and other law enforcement organisations, the University of Public Service could become a Hungarian think-tank for international research on public service.

The tasks of the organisation for the development of security techniques and procedures may include, but are not limited to:

- Research and organisational activities to identify user needs and available technological solutions and development opportunities (workshops, conferences, online resource monitoring, networking, publications).
- Creating and maintaining a network of researchers and professionals at national and international level for research and development.
- Defining specifications, identifying research and development objectives by matching identified user needs and technological opportunities.
- Generating and securing the necessary resources to achieve the identified research or development objective, carrying out ‘market’ background research in line with professional needs, consortium building.
- Managing and coordinating the research and development project, when resources are available.
- Managing the results of the projects, utilisation where they are authorised by the state (owner), and putting the products on the market.

Summary

In summary, INTERPOL’s innovative initiatives have transformed the global law enforcement landscape. As the world continues to evolve, INTERPOL’s role in countering emerging threats and supporting its member countries remains indispensable. By remaining at the forefront of innovation, INTERPOL is poised to meet the challenges of the future and continue its vital mission of promoting global security and justice.

In domestic practice, the laboratory model is used to develop the proactive capabilities of government, public administration, law enforcement and military institutions, adapted to market needs. The laboratory’s activities include the development and even market introduction of new technologies for public security and disaster management.

In order to create innovative and secure societies and increase the subjective sense of security of the population, it is important to strengthen further domestic and international cooperation in the field of scientific research and development. *‘Nowadays, when the Police trust index is outstandingly good and citizens are showing increasing interest in the activities and results of our organisation, it is important to carry out and present police work supported by scientific results. Good professional practice cannot develop without the knowledge gained through scientific research.’* (Németh, 2016).

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URL6: *Criminal intelligence analysis*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Criminal-intelligence-analysis2>

URL7: *Capacity building*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Capacity-building>

URL8: *Interpol Response Teams*. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/INTERPOL-response-teams>

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INTERPOL and the Challenges of the 21st Century



Tim Morris

independent consultant, strategic advisor
AM APM
timmorrisinsight@gmail.com

Abstract

Aim: INTERPOL has undergone a series of reforms in the past 8–9 years. Whilst improving the transparency and accountability of the organisation, the areas of finance, technology, the CCF and diversity of the senior executive require further reform. The article aims to further explore why these issues should be a priority for INTERPOL in the short term.

Methodology: The article reviews recent INTERPOL news releases and outcomes of recent General Assembly resolutions to further develop the case for further reforms of INTERPOL activities. A review of material generated by NGO's and other interested parties is also included.

Findings: INTERPOL faces unprecedented challenges in a complex global environment. To successfully navigate this complexity, INTERPOL will need addressing three vital areas of operation. First, INTERPOL will need to restructure its budget and secure increased permanent funding to enable the renewal of its information technology infrastructure. Second, it needs to reform the CCF as a vital enabler for the continued issuance of red notices. Third, INTERPOL will have to address these shortcomings in its senior executive diversity.

Value: A more comprehensive understanding of the issues that INTERPOL currently faces will ultimately assist policy makers. The understanding of the inherent weakness in the INTERPOL budget structures will assist governments to consider alternative funding models. Similarly, INTERPOL is required to be at the forefront of developing world leading information solutions to law enforcement including border agencies. Lastly, INTERPOL requires the support of all 195 member countries to continue to have

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international legitimacy in key policy forums. Senior executive representation constitutes a vital component.

Keywords: INTERPOL, funding, technology, CCF

Introduction

As INTERPOL celebrates its 100-year anniversary it provides the ideal time to reflect on the journey that the organisation has travelled and to identify some of the key issues that will contribute to defining whether INTERPOL can be judged as a success into the future.

Whilst the organisation has transitioned through many phases throughout this time, other than the suspension of the organisation's activities during the second world war, there has never been arguably more challenging circumstances than exist today for an international organisation to function effectively.

Whether INTERPOL is capable of the self-reform required to meet those challenges remains to be seen. The last 8–9 years has witnessed some reform of processes that could be described as incremental self-preservation. These revolve largely around the attempts to sustain the issuance of red notices and related processes and a rather standard update of governance policy and procedures, such as declaring conflicts of interest, the introduction of a code of conduct and tighter rules concerning election processes ([URL1](#)), that were non-existent prior to this time.

However commendable this progress may be, the challenges facing INTERPOL are more significant. A major refresh of technology, structural deficiencies in the budget, processes surrounding the issuance of red notices, the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL Files (CCF) and the lack of diversity with the senior leadership of INTERPOL are required to be addressed to enable the organisation to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Context

At the time of writing this article, Europe is engaged in a major war, terrorism has flared again in the Middle East that has repercussions that could and probably will extend globally ([URL2](#)). Conflict and terrorism continue across Eastern and Western Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. China has engaged in one of the most prolific arms build ups in modern history ([URL3](#)), whilst the US

engages in a major economic offensive to restrict the spread of cutting-edge technologies to countries judged hostile to intentions (URL4).

The now undeniable impacts of climate change are affecting millions of the world's populations more often and more severely. This creates economic and actual hardships that place extra pressure on resource poor governments and provides a further incentive for migration, often facilitated by organised crime. Politically, new blocs are being born and transformed. Much of the security architecture that the global community has relied upon either no longer exists or has been reduced in reliability (URL5).

Traditionally, the leadership of many international organisations, INTERPOL included, have been dominated by European and North American candidates. A product of both the post Second World War order and the better resourced and organised bureaucracies it was in effect, a product of the time (Wade, 2013). Clearly this post war order is now under stress. New organisations such as the G20 and BRICS to name but a few are jostling to find a niche in a more contested global environment. Institutions such as the EU, the United Nations are finding it increasingly difficult to influence the global security architecture. The Global Coalition Against Daesh was a classic example whereby the United States and other key players simply bypassed the United Nations in the pursuit of Daesh due to the perceived inability of the UN to achieve any meaningful outcomes. Ironically INTERPOL was a member of this coalition (URL6).

In this sea of shifting alliances and blocs, the global community is searching for institutions to assist in coalescing individual state players into meaningful coordinated action on a range of issues including organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime. What better institution than INTERPOL to bring together 195 member countries police forces? The casual observer would believe that such an organisation would be strongly supported by governments globally. Yet INTERPOL is an interesting case as it is an 'orphan' organisation. It does not belong to, or is it affiliated with the United Nations, OECD or any other umbrella organisation. It is largely funded through the police budgets of its member countries. The result is an underwhelming budget that falls well short of the organisations objectives. This orphan status is both an asset and a liability, that impacts both political clout and financial security.

On one hand INTERPOL is not constrained by the bureaucratic maze so constantly encountered with dealing UN agencies, but on the other hand it lacks the political influence to extract any political or financial benefit from other international groupings such as the G7 or G20 where it is often reduced to cameo appearances and bylines in communique (URL7). This is no way to be

interpreted as a criticism of the Secretary General or his staff who dutifully try to capitalise on these opportunities when they arise.

Technology and Finance

Despite Hollywood's tendencies, INTERPOL is ostensibly an information-based agency. Its currency is the information that member countries are willing to share to successfully investigate their own crimes and to prevent crimes from impacting fellow member countries. To facilitate this process INTERPOL hosts 19 separate databases ([URL8](#)). Whilst a dedicated team of information technologists holds this capability together working with a relatively miniscule budget, if the status quo continues then INTERPOL risks slipping into irrelevance and redundancy unless major investments are made not only to upgrade but also to sustain these important capabilities.

To rectify this situation the General Assembly approved in 2019 the introduction of the I-CORE programme. A multi-year 100 million euro investment into upgrading INTERPOL's operational data bases and technology backbone to assist to ensure that the organisation can deliver well into the twenty-first century ([URL9](#)). The initial benefits are clear – access to biometrics at borders, smart case messaging to more easily identify and extract data and the creation of a unified information architecture. All features that contemporary police practitioners would expect in a modern policing information exchange organisation. Yet INTERPOL has struggled to find donor countries to fund these initiatives. Admirably, several European countries have made contributions to the I-CORE project to kickstart the building of these vital capabilities.

The challenge of I-CORE is made more difficult in terms of sustainment. The ongoing maintenance and enhancement of permanent databases extends of many years. The initial budget of building and refining a modern information technology is expensive. However, licence fees, attracting and retaining key personnel for key areas remains an ongoing concern and is not unique to INTERPOL. The INTERPOL budget is generally not structured or funded to account for these foreseeable expenses.

The total INTERPOL annual budget consists of around 153 million euros per year. Statutory contributions (member country dues) provide about 68 million euros per annum whilst the balance consists of voluntary cash contributions totalling 54 million euros and in-kind contributions of 36 million euros (mainly the cost of seconded officers and premises provided by governments), ([URL10](#)). The amount of cash contributions can vary from year to year and is

primarily originates from governments. These funds are normally tied to delivering a specific outcome such as training in counter terrorism or funding for staff for a set period in the crime against children section for example, so there is limited flexibility for INTERPOL on how to expend these funds.

With only 68 million euros of certain recurring funding and an ever-increasing salaries bill as the secretariat reaches nearly 1100 staff members then INTERPOL may face some difficult decisions ahead. Unless a substantial increase in recurring funding can be secured, then INTERPOL will likely face the difficult choice between reducing information technology services supporting member countries police activities or reducing the number of staff within the secretariat. An unenviable choice for sure.

Processes/CCF

The most contentious area of INTERPOL's operations in the past 10 years has been the issuance of the famous red notice and its abuse by primarily, but not exclusively, autocratic regimes to pursue their opponents. As a result of the enormous increase in the issuance of red notices since the introduction of the internet-based system called I-Link in 2009, the public pressure on INTERPOL has grown ([URL11](#)). Whilst intent of the introduction of this system was proper it appears that little thought was given to consequences of what an exponential increase in the issuance of red notices would result in.

This growth ultimately culminated in a crisis within INTERPOL in 2015 where several lawsuits resulted in the organisation realising that it was facing an existential crisis. The choices were clear, either cease the issuance of red notices and hence one of the primary rationales for the organisation's existence or enact a series of reforms that enabled the continuation of the issuance of red notices ([URL12](#)).

Over the following years several well documented initiatives were enacted that enabled INTERPOL to fulfil one of its core functions and continue with the issuing of red notices. These have been well recorded elsewhere. The process remains with its critics. An important part of this process was a limited reform of the CCF. Whilst it is well known that two chambers were created to assist in the administration of its functions arguably some of the most impactful reforms were not addressed.

Many complaints exist about the performance of the CCF ([URL13](#)). The majority of these revolve around three issues. First, the reasons for the decisions were often not in writing. Second, communication was often slow and excruciating as

the CCF insisted on mailing all correspondence. Third, the positions for the CCF are part-time and unpaid. Therefore, complainants are often waiting months and sometime years for decisions as the CCF meets on only 4 occasions per year. The impact of these delays can have major consequences for the applicants.

To expedite the CCF process elected members could be paid a salary and moved to full time positions. This initiative would have the advantage of decreasing the time taken to make decisions and could be undertaken with a reduced number of members. It would also increase the knowledge and professionalism of the CCF as a dedicated panel exclusively examining matters. The supporting secretariat would also be updated with staff skilled in legal registry and research functions and modern communication techniques.

Senior Executive Diversity

A colleague once commented that when he walked into the INTERPOL headquarters it looks more like Europol than an international police organisation. This observation was obviously a direct swipe at the diversity of staff at the INTERPOL Secretariat. Whilst INTERPOL has recently proposed in the 2022 General Assembly a belated attempt to address the longstanding concerns about the lack of diversity within the organisation, it essentially misses the point.

The INTERPOL Secretariat correctly highlights that officers from over 100 countries are represented within the secretariat, ([URL14](#)). This has been the case for some time. Rather, the Europol comments made by the colleague referred to the senior executive level positions within the organisation. These are predominantly occupied by officers from European and North American countries. While there is nothing wrong with the officers' individual abilities (all were selected on the basis of merit), it is hardly reflective of the global constituency that INTERPOL represents.

Numerous studies have proven that diverse leadership teams are generally more successful than those that are not ([Burke & Titus, 2020](#)). There exists a significant opportunity for INTERPOL to build a high performing leadership team that is truly representative of the membership. In the INTERPOL secretariats defence, there is often a lack of diverse candidates for senior executive positions within the organisation. Whilst some efforts have been made to attract more diverse fields of candidates these have generally been lacklustre and inconsistent. Let's hope that the Executive Committee of INTERPOL fulfils its core functions and ensure that the secretariat follows up on this General Assembly resolution in the future.

Conclusion

The successful administration of any international public organisation is challenging, even in stable and prosperous times. At the time of writing this article the global community is emerging from a global pandemic, encountering difficult financial conditions, facing regional conflicts and the emergence of an unstable Middle East and Africa for the foreseeable future. Under these circumstances, and to be successful, organisations will require the financial resources, technology, processes, and people to be successful or perhaps even survive.

INTERPOL needs to attract a stream of financing that is reoccurring to build and sustain the 19 vital databases that provide the tangible backbone of its business. To date INTERPOL has been unable to convince member countries that funding is required to be mainstreamed from national budgets rather than siphoned off from already stretched national police budgets as is the current practice. Unless this can be achieved then in a few years INTERPOL will once again be placed in the unenviable position of having to cut staff and reduce programmes.

The INTERPOL red notice and CCF reform must continue and deliver some major changes if the red notice is going to survive as a credible international instrument. The CCF must undertake major reforms to establish itself as a reputable venue for red notice adjudication. It is up to the INTERPOL General Assembly to decide whether these changes can take place and for the secretariat to enact them with timeliness and vigour.

The composition of the INTERPOL senior executive must reflect the organisation that it represents. It does not do that now and has not done this for some time. Swift and decisive measures are required to be taken to encourage diversity throughout the senior executive cadre of the organisation. The INTERPOL Executive Committee has a special responsibility to ensure that the resolution passed at the last General Assembly is acted upon and the highly visible results are there for all to see.

If these steps are not undertaken, then it is difficult to see how the organisation will prosper. It is unlikely that a single calamity will occur, and the organisation will collapse overnight. A more likely outcome is that INTERPOL will slowly slip into irrelevance as international bodies sometimes do.

Many observers do not realise how close that INTERPOL came to calamity in 2018 when several members of the organisation genuinely threatened to quit the INTERPOL if a Major General of the Russian FSB was elected as President of the organisation. This then poses the question of how would the global police community cooperate, especially in the pursuit of international fugitives if an organisation such as INTERPOL did not exist? No one knows for sure the

answer to this question, but surely the answer is not as effectively. If an international body were to be proposed today to adapt the same or similar mission as INTERPOL, could it be done? It is extremely unlikely that any consensus could ever be reached in today's geopolitical environment.

That INTERPOL with all its faults remains the most viable option available in meeting these threats and attempting to ameliorate the impacts of organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime globally. INTERPOL has a substantial amount of work to do to make the organisation as effective as possible in achieving its own mission.

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The beginnings of INTERPOL

The Monaco National Central Bureau



Richard Marangoni

General Controller
Public Security Directorate of the Principality of Monaco
Director
INTERPOL National Central Bureau Monaco
rmarangoni@gouv.mc

Abstract

Aim: This article presents the 1st international judicial police congress, which was held in Monaco, from 14 to 18 April 1914, as well as its outcome, and recalls the commemoration of its centenary at the 83rd session of the INTERPOL General Assembly, held in Monaco from 3 to 7 November 2014.

Methodology: Documents from Monegasque archives were used for the writing of this article. Some of them are published here.

Findings: From the beginning of the 20th century, the Principality of Monaco, under the leadership of a visionary Head of State, His Serene Highness Prince Albert I, was strongly involved in the implementation of instruments aimed at establishing international cooperation between the judicial police departments of different countries and improve exchanges in criminal matters, to facilitate the search and arrest of criminals. To this end, Monaco organised in 1914 the first congress that brought together police officers and lawyers, who were tasked with developing proposals to meet these new needs and put representatives from around twenty countries in direct contact with each other. The outbreak of the First World War, however, interrupted the continuation of the process of strengthening international exchanges initiated on this occasion, which should have led to a second stage planned in 1916 and eventually did not resume until 1923.

Value: 2023 is the year of the Centenary of the creation of the International Criminal Police Commission, which became the International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL. From a historical point of view, it is interesting to look at the beginnings of the founding of an international institution specialised in the field of fight against crime and to recall that this construction is the

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result of a more ancient reflection initiated at the beginning of the 20th century, which first materialised through an initiative in Monaco in 1914 (commemorated in 2014, also in Monaco). The resolutions that were adopted by the experts of the time, gathered at the invitation of the Principality, and are presented in this contribution underline the precision of the issues they had identified, as well as the relevance of the proposed solutions, some of those still being valid today.

Keywords: INTERPOL, history, judicial police, Monaco

109 years ago, Prince Albert I decided to bring together, in Monaco, police officers and lawyers from 27 different countries to consider the creation of a new organisation intended to facilitate the search and arrest of criminals.

Picture 1

Report from the International Judicial Police Congress



Note. Journal de Monaco du 5 Mai 1914.

In January 1914, Mr Joseph Henri Simard, Director of the ‘Sûreté publique’ was designated as Secretary General, meaning he was in charge of most of the organisation. He was assisted by Maître Georges Anquetil, lawyer at the Paris Court of Appeal.

Picture 2
Prince Albert I



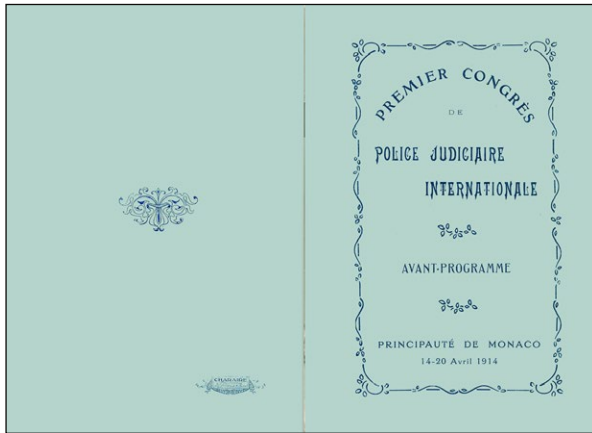
Note. [URL1](#).

The 1st International Judicial Police Congress was held from 14 to 18 April 1914, at the Oceanographic Museum. It brought together 300 delegates, under the presidency of an imminent jurist, the dean of the Faculty of Paris, Professor Larnaude.

This 1st International Judicial Police Congress defined the bases of an organisation focused on the fight against crime and the pooling of operational resources to make it more effective. This visionary initiative constituted the first step in international police cooperation, the need for which has strengthened over time and accelerated in recent decades.

Picture 4

Preliminary programme (1914)



Note. URL2.

Participants were divided into four sections depending on the nature of the work.

The first section

It was chaired by Mr. Goron, former head of the Paris Police.

Its assessors were Mr De Lebedeff, delegate of the Ministry of the Interior of Russia and Mr Reiss, director of the Institute of Forensic Science in Lausanne.

The wishes, which will be adopted at the end of the Congress, were as follows:

- I. The Congress of International Judicial Police expressed the wish to see generalisation and improvement of direct official police-to-police relations between different countries, in order to allow all investigations likely to facilitate the action of repressive justice.
- II. Congress expressed the hope that Governments agreed to grant, to all judicial and police authorities, international postal, telegraphic and telephone freedom, in order to facilitate the arrest of criminals.
- III. The Congress recognised the need for an international language in the reports of police officials belonging to different countries and expressed the wish to use French until Esperanto or any other similar language becomes widespread enough to be used for this purpose.
- IV. The Congress expressed the wish that the teaching of forensic science is given to students in all Faculties of Law.

The second section

It included president Mr Mouton, Director of the Judicial Police at the Paris Police Prefecture, Mr Maurice Quentin, President of the General Council of the Seine, and Mr Voinescu, Inspector General of the Police Services of Romania.

The Congress expressed the wish that the Government of the Principality of Monaco takes the initiative of requesting, from the Governments of the different countries, the appointment of an international Commission, composed of specialists, which would be responsible for preparing, in Paris, subject to the approval of the French Government, the bases for the creation of :

- the international safety data sheet;
- the classification system of these sheets;
- the determination of the categories to be established among common law criminals, so-called 'international' or 'cosmopolitan'.

The third section

Its president was Mr Nagels, substitute for the Attorney General at the Court of Appeal of Liège, and its assessors were Mr Dupin, President of the Montbrison Bar Association and Mr Niceforo, Professor at the Faculty of Law of Rome, delegate of the Italian Government.

The following single wish was voted:

The Congress of International Judicial Police retains the principle as likely to provoke the examination of the Powers concerned and requests the referral, for a more in-depth study, to the examination of the Commission whose principle was decided for the creation of an International Bureau of Identity.

The fourth section

Finally, the fourth section was made up of president Mr Baron Garofalo, Senator, President of Chamber at the Court of Cassation of Rome, Mr Mallein, Advisor to the Court of Cassation of Paris and Mr Frerejouan-du-Saint, Delegate of the Société Générale des Prisons, assessors.

The following four wishes have been adopted:

- I. The International Law Societies are studying the formation of a model extradition treaty and ask them to kindly make the results of their work known to the next International Judicial Police Congress.
- II. Extradition must be requested directly, from the State where the crime or offense was committed, to the judicial authority of the country where the

accused has taken refuge. In the event that extradition is granted by the judicial authority, the Government will always have the right to refuse it.

- III. Provisional arrest must always be possible, on the visa, by the judicial authority of the country of refuge, of the warrant issued by the judge of the country where the crime was committed. In the event of an emergency, it will be carried out upon simple notice of the existence of a warrant. Said arrest, including all operations which are the ordinary result of these warrants, will take place only for crimes or common law offenses. It will be immediately followed by the interrogation of the accused.
- IV. In the event of simultaneous prosecutions carried out in two different countries, the extradited person will be handed over to the requesting country as soon as the decision pronounced on the prosecutions against him in the requested country has become final, unless he is returned to the prisons of the requested country, to continue serving his sentence there, when the judicial authorities of the requesting country have, in turn, made a definitive decision.

As the debates progressed, decisions to the advantage of all participating States have been adopted most of the time by a very large majority, or even unanimously.

The creation of a single body, aimed at centralising certain information that can be used by the police of all countries, emerged from the adopted wishes.

Thus, the objective of the 1st International Judicial Police Congress was largely achieved, about bringing the heads of different police forces from around the world into closer contact, so that they were encouraged to provide mutual services in the increasingly delicate struggle they have to wage against international gangs of thieves.

Considering the success of this congress, the members decided to plan the next one in 1916 in Bucharest.

But history would not allow us to go beyond the second quarter of 1914. The assassination of the Archduke of Austria and Crown Prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Franz Ferdinand, on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), would serve as a pretext for the outbreak of the First World War.

Work only resumed in 1923 during the 2nd congress which was held in Austria and the creation of the International Criminal Police Commission-INTERPOL, at the initiative of the Director of the Vienna Police.

The world has changed since the beginning of the 20th century. Even if international cooperation was suspended during the two great world wars, between 1914 and 1918, then between 1939 and 1945, it resumed in 1946 with the creation of

the International Criminal Police Organization–INTERPOL which succeeded the ICPC–INTERPOL.

The Principality of Monaco has been a member of INTERPOL, ‘Europe’ region, since 21 June 1950. Like other member countries, the Monaco National Central Bureau is linked to the national services responsible for applying the law to other countries and the General Secretariat via the secure global police communications network I-24/7.

Police services have had to constantly adapt technical and legal tools to understand, ever better, the evolution of crime and carry out concerted operations to neutralise delinquents capable of using all technological progress for their benefit.

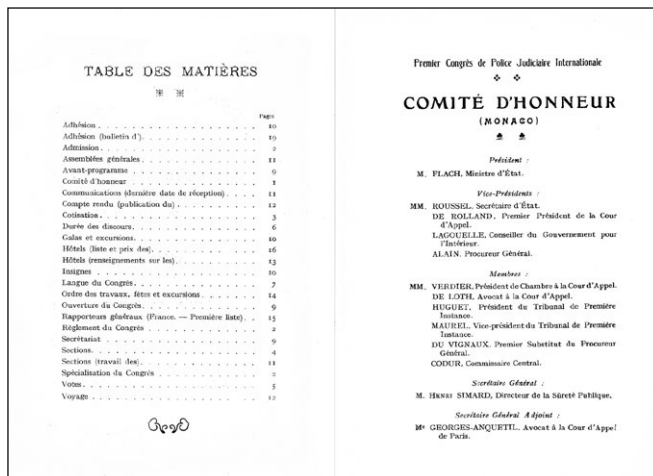
In order to improve police intervention capabilities, the INTERPOL General Secretariat organises annual general assemblies and European regional conferences, in different countries each time but with common rules at each session.

In this context, the Principality of Monaco welcomed:

- *18th European Regional Conference* from 29 to 31 March 1989,
- *83rd General Assembly* from 3 to 7 November 2014, to pay tribute to Prince Albert I who created the First International Judicial Police Congress.

Picture 5

Honorary Committee



Note. Monegasque archives.

The NCB Monaco also participates in the annual meetings of the Heads of National Central Bureaus of member countries, organised by the INTERPOL General Secretariat.

The NCB Monaco is attached to the Judicial Police Division of Monaco Public Security. It collaborates, particularly in international investigations, with:

- Law enforcement agencies in their country;
- Other NCBs and Sub-offices;
- General Secretariat offices around the world.

It feeds global databases with its criminal data, in compliance with national legislation, and cooperates in transnational investigations, operations and arrests.

Even if the Principality of Monaco remains a small nation from a geographical point of view, it is nonetheless very active internationally. Indeed, following armed robberies perpetrated by criminals affiliated with the ‘Pink Panthers’ gang in 2007, Monaco initiated the creation of the ‘*Pink Panthers*’ working group. Since then, several teams of robbers have been arrested and armed robberies have been avoided thanks to this daily active prevention.

In 2012, during the European Regional Conference in Israel, NCB Monaco was also included in the working group which was created to turn back crime by organised groups.

More recently, Monaco has participated in the network of cybercrime experts.

More than ever, ICPO–INTERPOL contributes to a safer world by being able to face the challenges of organised crime.

Thus, through its National Bureau, the Principality of Monaco remains an active member of INTERPOL in terms of international cooperation. It remains a force of proposal, its skills being recognised worldwide in the fight against international crime. The speed of execution of cross-border arrest requests remains one of its main characteristics.

Today, we have the pleasure of being all gathered in Vienna in the continuation of the visionary initiative of Prince Albert I, to say the least, in order to celebrate 100 years of the creation of INTERPOL and to take stock of the operational initiatives that have developed between the Heads of NCBs to contribute to a more secure world.

Picture 6

Prince Albert II, Mireille Balestrazzi and Ronald Noble on the 83rd INTERPOL General Assembly



Note. Public Security Directorate of the Principality of Monaco.

Online links in the article

URL1: *Prince Albert I.* <https://www.oceano.org/en/organization/the-great-figures/prince-albert-i/>
URL2: *Preliminary programme (1914).* <https://www.interpol.int/content/download/5664/file/1914-Invitation.pdf>

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INTERVIEW

’»Speaking the Same Language« – in Fact or Metaphorically – Makes a Difference.’ Interview with Dr. Mátyás Hegyaljai, Deputy State Secretary for EU and International Affairs of Ministry of Interior



Valér Dános

Prof. Dr, Editor-in-Chief,
professor, retired police major
general
Ministry of Interior,
Belügyi Szemle Editorship
valer.danos@bm.gov.hu



Csaba Szabó

PhD, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, associate
professor, police lieutenant colonel
Ministry of Interior,
Belügyi Szemle Editorship
University of Győr,
Deák Ferenc Faculty of Law and
Political Sciences
csaba.szabo3@bm.gov.hu



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Abstract

Dr. Mátyás Hegyaljai, Deputy State Secretary for EU and International Affairs of Ministry of Interior (Hungary), is the interviewee in our thematic issue commemorating the 100th anniversary of INTERPOL. Mr. Hegyaljai's name may ring a bell not only for our Hungarian readers but also for our foreign readers, as he was the head of the Hungarian INTERPOL National Central Bureau, a member and then President of the INTERPOL European Commission and later a member of the INTERPOL Executive Committee. During the interview we discussed the global, regional and national aspects of law enforcement, the importance of regional – including European – cooperation, the impact of the digital revolution and the COVID epidemic, Hungary's role in combating crime, and Mr Hegyaljai's personal experiences. The Deputy State Secretary was interviewed by Prof. Dr Valér Dános, Editor-in-Chief, and Dr Csaba Szabó, Deputy Editor-in-Chief.

Keywords: INTERPOL, INTERPOL European Commission, INTERPOL Executive Committee, global combating crimes

INTERPOL's activity focuses on three broad categories of crime: trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, drug trafficking and organised crime and economic and cyber-crime. In the first two types of crime, Hungary is involved as a transit country. How does this fact determine our role and weight in international cooperation?

INTERPOL focuses on sixteen types of crime (corruption, counterfeiting of currency and documents, crimes against children, crimes against cultural heritage, drug-related crimes, crimes against the environment, financial crimes, arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, counterfeiting of goods, 'maritime crimes', organised crime, terrorism, vehicle crime, war crimes), including those listed in the question. Our country cooperates with the organisation on most types of crime, some more actively, others less so, such as maritime crime.

Is there a difference in the way organised crime and trafficking in human beings are perceived domestically and by INTERPOL? How much does working in an international organisation change the way of thinking of the police adapted to domestic conditions?

INTERPOL is a global organisation, so it takes the same approach to crimes, but it also takes into account the specificities of the regions, for example, the

situation of human trafficking in Africa is not the same as in the European Union. There is also a need to think more broadly for police officers at national level, as data can be accessed very quickly through INTERPOL which would have been unimaginable a few decades ago. Thanks to recent technological developments, national police officers can also directly access certain INTERPOL databases, so they may have to deal with persons wanted by American, Asian or African countries, or encounter documents, vehicles or works of art wanted by distant countries.

How was the expected career and tasks of an INTERPOL officer different from those of colleagues who just starting their career?

It is difficult to make a comparison when we are talking about professional police officers, as they can only join the organisation through a tender, spend a certain amount of time (3–4 years) in the INTERPOL Secretariat and are typically not at the beginning of their career. Although not many Hungarians have been seconded in this way so far, the cooperation is nevertheless excellent.

The digital revolution has had a significant impact on INTERPOL's work, including on the effectiveness of international teams. What is your personal experience of this increase in volume?

Our world, like the nature of crime, is constantly changing. In 2014, the organisation opened the INTERPOL Global Innovation Complex in Singapore, with the main objective of equipping Member State's police forces with the tools and knowledge to better tackle new challenges, with a particular focus on crimes related to the digital space. With the growth in the number of members, the increase in the amount of data transferred and the IT developments, the intensity of INTERPOL's activities seems to be increasing year on year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an inescapable shaping force in recent years. Has the impact of the pandemic been felt on the work of the organisation and, if so, in what form?

As regards the organisation of work, both the General Secretariat and the Member States have introduced a system adapted to local specificities. The General Secretariat was almost completely closed, with minimal staff and a large part of the staff working from home offices. The INTERPOL offices in the Member States have adopted different solutions. Full home office or presence-only,

and various combinations of these. INTERPOL has monitored the impact of the outbreak on global crime trends since its inception and has kept Member States informed through various analyses and other materials. Generally speaking, in addition to epidemic-related crimes (counterfeit medical devices, medicines, vaccines), offences committed in virtual space have become more prominent.

Hungary (re)joined INTERPOL in 1981, during the socialist regime. How did the change of regime in 1989, the break-up of the bipolar world order, bring about a change in the cooperation for Hungary?

At first we started with a small office, which expanded very slowly and for a long time functioned as a non-determining unit of the National Police Headquarters. After the change of regime, our country started to cooperate more and more openly with other Member States and with the centre on a purely professional basis, and then, as we were about to become a member of the European Union, an integrated international communication organisation was created, which was named International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre (ILECC).

In the period since accession, Hungary has been witness to a number of major events: in addition to the regime change, we have joined NATO, the European Union, Europol, SIRENE, and we have become neighbours of several countries on the external borders of the Schengen area. How have these events affected the changing role and weight of Hungary in the regional and international community of INTERPOL?

Hungary is one of the few INTERPOL Member States that is a member of all the above-mentioned organisations. I would rather say that first all our borders were Schengen external borders, and then with deeper integration these borders were dismantled, so our external borders have been continuously shortened, but this does not mean that less attention has to be paid to external border control. In recent years, the migration crisis and the Russian-Ukrainian war have meant that our country has had to make even greater efforts to comply with national and EU law in these areas, while guaranteeing the highest level of public security. The EU, and therefore Europol, Frontex, other EU agencies, regional organisations and our membership of Schengen, gives us a prominent role in the INTERPOL community of 195 Member States.

After 2015, the organisational structure of the INTERPOL Hungarian National Central Bureau changed several times. Have these organisational changes

affected the functioning of the office? Did the change of the superior body have an impact on the emphasis of Hungarian participation?

Until 2015, the Hungarian INTERPOL National Central Bureau was part of the National Police Headquarters, initially as an independent body, then as part of the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre (ILECC) after its establishment. International cooperation in criminal matters through INTERPOL was not really influenced by the organisational framework of the office per se, but rather by the organisational integration that made and continues to make the operation more efficient.

To increase INTERPOL's success, the organisation has also introduced a regional mode of operation. What are the specificities of each region? Has an international standard been created that transcends regional, cultural and civilisational differences and standardises the functioning of the structures for all Member States?

In addition to the global approach, there is also a regional approach, for example, in addition to the global strategy, there are also regional strategies, which are prepared in line with the 'grand' strategy but focused on regional priorities. In addition, the organisation has developed the INTERPOL service standard, or what is now called the 'quality standards' framework, which sets out the requirements that each INTERPOL office should meet.

Are there any differences between the functioning, competences and integration of the INTERPOL European Committee and the other regional committees? If so, do these differences create difficulties for cooperation with the other regions or does its uniqueness facilitate it?

The INTERPOL European Committee is an advisory body made up of representatives of the Member States, which plays a role in strategic issues concerning the European region. The organisation's regional offices, which are located on every continent outside Europe as part of the General Secretariat, strengthen links with remote regions. It is difficult to talk about the difficulties of cooperation because of the different tasks, but the European Committee's role in strategic planning certainly contributes to the development of European cooperation and to the high level of interaction.

The level of cooperation has reached a unique level in the European region: without being exhaustive, the European Union, Europol, INTERPOL, the SIRENE Bureau, the International Criminal Court, the European Court of Human Rights, Frontex, all work side by side, together and in each other. Is there ever a case where there is a lot of organisational clutter or, as the saying goes, everybody's business is nobody's business?

The long-term objectives of these international organisations and EU agencies are indeed to protect public safety and prosecute crime, but they carry out their tasks with different powers and different tools, so their activities are complementary rather than obstructive. There may sometimes be so-called rivalry between organisations, but the competences and remits of EU agencies, for example, are clearly defined, so the chances of this happening are minimal. In addition, a co-ordination methodology has been developed whereby agency representatives meet regularly to avoid the phenomenon mentioned in this question.

With a little exaggeration, it can be said that Mr Hegyaljai has been at all levels of the organisation. How has this career changed your personal world view, your perception of law enforcement and internationalisation? Did any of the work experience you gained in the international arena, whether in terms of methodology, organisation or leadership, bring back home with you any that you have embedded in the department(s) you lead?

Indeed, and I am proud of the fact that I started my international career behind a desk in the INTERPOL National Central Bureau, and five years there was certainly enough time to get to grips with every detail of the organisation. After a few years of detour, but not leaving the international field, I also managed the INTERPOL National Central Bureau Budapest. It was a great success for me when I was elected to the INTERPOL European Committee in 2012 for a four-year term, three of which I was chairing the meetings of the Committee. I then applied to become a member of the INTERPOL Executive Committee, where I was elected in 2016. If it can be said that this was even more significant, as only 13 members out of 195 countries are elected to the membership, it is the most important decision-making body in INTERPOL, and no one from Hungary has ever been elected to this body before. In my career as a police officer, I have spent nearly thirty years in the international field and I have found that the knowledge I have acquired gives me a much broader perspective, allowing me to look beyond one country or even a narrow region and to see things from a global perspective. I learned a lot of techniques abroad that were not

used or given other priorities in our country at that time. I have of course tried to adapt these to the domestic context. What we often find is that information from other continents is more limited and very often the problem there may be geographically specific or society specific, so that it is not even present in our own environment. In many cases, we also see phenomena and trends that have simply not yet reached us.

The personal contact system also has its own specificity. In this area, we need to be more open, active and proactive. Just as in everyday life and in working relations, personal contact can improve quality and speed up resolution, because the trust required for police work is even more important here, especially in cases where external factors (political, cultural, religious, linguistic differences) may call this into question. Whether one is able to communicate directly with a partner through an interpreter or through knowledge of the language in question makes a difference, so it makes a difference whether we are actually or figuratively ‘speaking the same language’.

Reference of the article according to APA regulation

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INTRODUCING BELÜGYI SZEMLE

(HOME AFFAIRS REVIEW)

The 70-year-old *Belügyi Szemle* is a monthly, highly ranked scientific and professional journal of the Ministry of the Interior of Hungary. This high recognition is evidenced by the fact that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has classified the journal in the highest Category ‘A’. The significant role of the journal in the Hungarian scientific space is also shown by the fact that in the last four years, since our exit to the digital space, *Belügyi Szemle* has moved up 50 places in the ranking based on the relevant database of the Hungarian Science Bibliography (the database of Hungarian scientific publications), which includes nearly 300 journals, and is ranked 15th in 2023. The journal covers fields and disciplines such as police science, criminology, forensic science, law, but also publishes papers on the frontier of these disciplines. In line with international standards, the Editorial Board applies a system of double-blind readership. Each year, the Editorial Board recognises the authors of the best articles of the period under review with the annual Nivo Award.

The journal is already indexed by several international organisations, such as ProQuest and EBSCO, but is also present in the CrossRef (DOI) scientific database, the WorldCat international library service, and the Google Scholar online scientific database search. In 2024, the Editorial Board will apply to join the two most important international indexing organisations: SCOPUS and Web of Science. Our professional partners are iThenticate, a plagiarism detection and content checking service, and ROAD (Directory of Open Access scholarly Resources).

Belügyi Szemle is a scientific and professional journal published in print and digital format. The monthly print issues include articles in Hungarian, but due to the international scientific environment, the articles also include English titles, abstracts and keywords. Several times a year, we also publish online special issues in English. We are welcome to accept both professional and scientific articles submitted by foreign authors.

The use of the internationally accepted Open Journal Systems (OJS) journal management and editing software for dynamic editing, proofreading and publishing of submitted manuscripts is a milestone in digital development. As a result of the continuous uploading of articles published in print over the past 70 years, our OJS archive now contains nearly 1500 articles. The high level of interest is reflected in the almost 21,000 articles downloaded each month by

Hungarian and foreign readers. We also have a website in English and Hungarian, where you can find the latest professional and scientific news, as well as the latest issue of our journal and our monthly newsletter. From 2024 we are planning to publish in both Hungarian and English valuable articles of interest to Hungarian and foreign scientists, academics and professionals.

We hope that leaders, officers, delegates and invited guests attending the INTERPOL 100th Anniversary General Assembly will enjoy reading the contributions of invited authors in the pages of the scientific journal *Belügyi Szemle*. Please take home our anniversary issue, promote our journal as widely as possible, and encourage and support your colleagues to publish their professional and scientific articles, reports and book reviews in future issues of *Belügyi Szemle*. The Editorial Board of *Belügyi Szemle* does its utmost to ensure that its publications play their intended role in the widest international academic arena and are of the highest quality, whether they are research, educational or public policy publications.

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Belügyi Szemle 2023/11:**



International relations:

Csaba Szabó PhD police lieutenant colonel
Ministry of Interior of Hungary, *Belügyi Szemle*
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, associate professor
Email: csaba.szabo3@bm.gov.hu

Szandra Fazekas-Pátyodi
editorial associate
Email: szandra.patyodi@bm.gov.hu



CONDITIONS OF PUBLICATION

Belügyi Szemle accepts and publishes scientific announcements / publications with outstanding alignment to the control and organisational system of the Ministry of Interior, which first of all focus on law enforcement, public order, public safety, safety policy, self-government affairs, social deviances, and further analyses and evaluates the questions of law enforcement from criminological, criminal sociological, criminal legal and policing aspects.

Belügyi Szemle accepts manuscripts of the authors for editing through applying in the Open Journal Systems.

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Phone number: +36 (26) 795-900 / 24-600

Email: szerkesztoseg@belugyiszemle.hu

Web: www.belugyiszemle.hu

OJS: ojs.mtak.hu/index.php/belugyiszemle/index



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