



PR230459

28.03.2023

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Maltese Parliamentary delegation participates in the 12th JPSG Conference on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)

The 12th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on Europol was held on 26 and 27 March in Stockholm, Sweden, as part of the meetings of the inter-parliamentary dimension of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Maltese delegation comprised MPs Omar Farrugia and Ivan Bartolo.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Adam Marttinen, Head of the Delegation of the Swedish Riksdag to the JPSG Europol, together with Mr Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar, co-chair from the European Parliament. The JPSG Europol brings together members of the Justice and Home Affairs committees from the national parliaments of the EU and the European Parliament. The scrutiny of Europol's activities and police cooperation in Europe to combat serious and organised crime are the main recurring themes on the agenda of the JPSG Conference.

Ms Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, was invited to deliver a keynote address where she stressed that the European Commission is committed to tackling serious and organised crime as outlined in the EU Security Union Strategy, including the fight against child sexual abuse. Ms Catherin De Bolle, Europol's Executive Director, presented Europol's new reinforced mandate and explained that Europol's Operational Task Forces is key in identifying and disrupting high-risk criminal networks and in supporting member states' investigations of child sexual abuse. Finally, Mr Wojciech Wiewiorowski, European Data Protection Supervisor, talked about the coordinated enforcement action and the role of data protection officers in member states. The role of data protection officers is crucial in ensuring that data protection law is applied within entities in the EU by bridging the gap between EU data protection law and its practical application.

In order to carry out its scrutiny, JPSG Europol can access various documents as well as interview leading Europol officials. JPSG Europol is also consulted on Europol's multiannual programme planning and can also summarise general conclusions regarding the political monitoring of Europol's activities, including non-binding recommendations to Europol. Such conclusions are submitted to the European Parliament, the national parliaments and to EU institutions for their information.

The Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, is also referred to as JPSG Europol. The JPSG scrutinises how Europol performs its duties. JPSG Europol meets twice a year, and the meetings are chaired jointly by the presiding parliament and the European Parliament. Each national parliament participates at the meeting.