



***For immediate release***

## **EUROJUST/COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

### **Conference on investigations of online child sexual violence on the Darknet**

**The Hague, 30 September – 1 October 2019**

#### **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

THE HAGUE, 30 September 2019: **Criminal investigators and prosecutors should make the best possible use of tools for international cooperation available to them when performing online investigations, especially when dealing with alarming threats such as Darknet criminality or online sexual violence against children** – this is the message of the [2<sup>nd</sup> joint conference on cybercrime organised by Eurojust and the Council of Europe](#).

The event, focusing specifically on investigations of online sexual violence against children on the Darknet, is gathering over 100 participants from countries supported by cybercrime capacity-building projects of the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as Eurojust National Members and representatives of international organisations, internet service providers, industry and civil society.

Over the course of two days, discussions will focus on the tools available to practitioners when dealing with cross-border cybercrime and collection of electronic evidence, as well as on strengthening international cooperation in this process.

According to Europol's [2018 Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment \(IOCTA\)](#), the amount of detected online child sexual exploitation material continues to grow, with more extreme material available on the Darknet, posing serious challenges for police investigations and victim identification efforts. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors are increasingly required to deal with identification of cybercriminals in foreign jurisdictions or with acquisition of data located abroad or somewhere on the Darknet. Tools such as 24/7 Points of Contact networks or mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs) have become keys to successful investigations and prosecutions.

Before the meeting, Mr Ladislav Hamran, Eurojust's President, said; *'Of all the types of cross-border crime we have to deal with, the online sexual exploitation of young and vulnerable children is particularly upsetting. To tackle this atrocious crime and the growth of Darknet criminality, we need to join forces. Our cooperation with the Council of Europe and other major actors in this field is of prime importance to us.'*



Mr Alexander Seger, Head of the Cybercrime Division at the Council of Europe, highlighted the global relevance of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime: *'With this treaty, an international framework for cooperation on cybercrime and e-evidence is in place and functioning. We are now negotiating an additional protocol to provide even more effective tools to secure evidence on servers in the cloud or on the Darknet.'*

Mr Carlos Bandin Bujan, Programme Manager at the European Commission DG DEVCO, expressed the EU's continuous support to the Council of Europe and the Budapest Convention, recognising univocally the Convention and its protocols **as the main global instrument to fight against cybercrime**. He further stressed the importance of alliances such as the one being forged through this conference: *'Eurojust and the Council of Europe joining forces to fight against cybercrime – it should be exemplary for many other bodies and agencies and of course applicable in other contexts alike. The capability of Eurojust to bring together the different national authorities – investigators, prosecutors and similar bodies – in solving a type of crime that has no borders combines in a perfect fashion with the capability of the Council of Europe, as the Guardians of the Budapest Convention, to reach out to the remotest flank on Earth building the necessary capacities to effectively fight online criminality in full compliance with international standards and safeguards.'*

The conference sessions will cover topics such as the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention); Eurojust's mission, objectives and available judicial tools for international cooperation on cybercrime; current procedures and issues encountered in obtaining electronic evidence under the Budapest Convention; issues and opportunities in collaborating with national and multinational service providers; case studies from country representatives, EU and international organisations on internet investigations on the Darknet and online sexual violence against children.