

"Strengthening co-operation on cybercrime and electronic evidence in Africa"

6-7 March 2023

BOUZNIKA CALL TO ACTION

The use of information and communication technologies contributes to social and economic development worldwide, however, it also increases the risk of cybercrime that affects our societies, including public and private sector institutions, and the rights and security of individuals.

Global emergencies, crises and conflicts have contributed to the increase in cybercrime. Knowing that any type of crime can nowadays involve electronic evidence on computer systems, often stored in foreign and unknown jurisdictions. Legal access to such evidence is essential to ensure the rule of law, protect human rights and enable victims to obtain justice.

States have a responsibility to protect society and individuals from crime, including through effective criminal investigation and prosecution, which is challenged by the transnational and ever-changing nature of cybercrime.

The need for extended and more effective co-operation on cybercrime and electronic evidence between States on the one hand, and between States and private sector organisations on the other, has never been more relevant.

The Conventions on protection of personal data and the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, its First Additional Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism through Computer Systems and its Second Additional Protocol on Enhancing Cooperation and Disclosure of Electronic Evidence are important and available legal instruments that facilitate national and international responses to cybercrime in accordance with the requirements of human rights and the rule of law.

Numerous capacity-building initiatives to improve the knowledge and skills of criminal justice institutions have been implemented and are ongoing in Africa. Sustained efforts in this regard are essential to achieve long-term results and trigger the reforms necessary for an effective response to cybercrime.

In this context, and following the exchanges and discussions that took place at the international conference "Strengthening Co-operation on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence in Africa" on 6-7 March 2023 in Bouznika, Morocco, all states, international and regional organisations, the private sector, academia and civil society organisations participating in the conference call on governments and partners to act now to put in place an effective response to cybercrime and to strengthen co-operation by

- Adopting clear and effective legislation taking into account the Conventions on protection of personal data and the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime and its protocols.

- Establish and strengthen specialised units within the law enforcement authorities.

- Develop and implement national training strategies for law enforcement agencies and strengthen co-operation with the private sector and academia, including between criminal justice authorities and service providers.

- Identify priorities for capacity building programmes in the medium and long term to enable partners to determine which measures and reforms to support.

- Support States and regional organisations in the African region to have the necessary technology and know-how to implement the tools of the Budapest Convention.

- Adopt a comprehensive approach to cybercrime and cybersecurity that takes into account the objectives of sustainable development in Africa.