

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

PC-OC(2020)08EN

Strasbourg, 18/09/2020

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS**

**(CDPC)**

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**  
**ON THE OPERATION OF EUROPEAN CONVENTIONS**  
**ON CO-OPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS**  
**(PC-OC)**

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

**WAYS TO INTERCONNECT PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL NETWORKS AND  
BODIES**

**Prepared by the Secretariat**

The Council of Europe's White Paper on Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) identifies international co-operation through networks as crucial to enhance efficiency in the investigation of complex forms of transnational crime. Indeed, swift co-operation, a thorough understanding of the transnational dimension and co-ordination of interventions and the execution of requests are essential in overcoming the legal diversity among member states involved in such investigations, and the challenges that may arise. The White Paper therefore recommends taking a proactive approach to the fight against such crimes, notably by promoting the expansion or setting up of contact points with relevant experience in fighting TOC with a view to, *inter alia*, assisting in the transfer and execution of requests and co-ordinating and sharing operational and investigative information within networks.

The PC-OC referred to the subsequent Council of Europe Action plan on Transnational Organised Crime when discussing ways to interconnect judicial networks during previous meetings. It was understood that the interconnection of judicial networks would be an important asset in the fight against every form of transnational crime.

Representatives of various judicial networks including the European Judicial Network (EJN), IberRed, the Iberamerican Association of Prosecutors (AIAMP) as well as of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which supports the activities of various judicial networks, were invited during the PC-OC meeting in November 2019 and the PC-OC Mod meeting of January 2020 to exchange views on how to further improve cooperation between these operational bodies.

Various possibilities to interconnect judicial networks were discussed, including by the establishment of a common list of relevant networks at a global level and their publication on the websites of those networks, the organisation of common meetings or activities between networks, the organisation of periodical meetings of secretariats of the networks, the use of the secretariats of the networks as a channel to provide the contact details of interlocutors for operational communications between different networks, etc.

During the PC-OC Mod meeting of January 2020, participants focused their efforts on the establishment of a common catalogue of relevant public international judicial networks at a global level. It was agreed that the criteria for the determination of networks to be included in the catalogue should be their operational nature and involvement in concrete cases at international level. The catalogue should also encompass all areas of the world. It was reminded that since crime knows no boundaries and criminal groups operate on all continents, it is increasingly important for practitioners who have to act quickly and who may not be familiar with foreign procedures to find the necessary practical assistance through networks.

Further to the meeting of the PC-OC Mod, written consultation between the Secretariat of the PC-OC, the EJN, IberRed, AIAMP and UNODC, allowed the development of:

**A provisional draft open-ended catalogue of operational public international judicial networks** including:

- a description of the tasks of each network or body,
  - a list of participating member states/ judicial authorities,
  - a website address where applicable and
  - the contact details of the secretariats of each network (by way of an institutional e-mail address).
- The secretariat should assist practitioners in finding their interlocutor in a given network. This will usually happen by providing them with the contact details of interlocutors, after having obtained their agreement. The draft catalogue was then sent to each network listed in the catalogue, along with a **questionnaire**. The replies to this questionnaire were compiled and enabled the Secretariat of the PC-OC to correct and complete the catalogue in consultation with the other networks.

**A virtual meeting by videoconference** was held on 5 June 2020 between the Secretariat of the PC-OC, the EJN, IberRed, AIAMP and UNODC to discuss the scope and technicalities of the project. It was highlighted that not all networks have the same nature (some are agencies or groups of contact persons created by international organisations or States) and that the title of the catalogue needed to reflect this. It was also agreed that only public networks and bodies should be considered. Participants agreed that, in the first stage, the project should be limited to establishing an open and provisional catalogue of public international judicial networks and bodies for the purpose of informing and assisting practitioners involved in concrete cases of international co-operation. It was proposed that once finalised, the common catalogue will be published and made available on the PC-OC website as well as on the websites of the respective networks, and regularly updated in order to maintain accurate information. The development of a search engine per State could also be envisaged. The latter would allow practitioners to see in which networks a particular State participates.

The possibility of developing additional activities such as the sharing of documents, and the **organisation of meetings between networks listed in the catalogue**, was also discussed. While all participants agreed that the interconnection of networks is essential for effective international cooperation, the nature and possibilities of future cooperation between networks will have to take into account the nature of each network or body, the existence of memoranda of understanding between some of them and the availability of resources.