

Introduction by the Executive Director

Detlef Schröder



Dear Reader,



We have seen in the last decade a constant and very dynamic change in the threat landscape of internal security in Europe.

Before 2014, there has been not such a relevant discussion round a massive problem with illegal migration into Europe. In the last years this topic became the decisive factor for elections in many EU Member States and on the European level.

Almost at the same time we have been facing an unprecedented wave of terrible terror acts across several EU Member States. These terrorist attacks have been directly linked to or inspired by extreme forms of Islamic radical ideologies.

Recently we have to notice equally a growing threat of extremism and terrorism from right wing oriented groups.

From the perspective of technology, digitalisation and all crime phenomena linked to it, are evolving equally very dynamic and we can predict - with full rollout of 5G, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and maybe driverless cars – that law enforcement needs to invest on a massive scale to prepare our officers for all these new challenges.

In a geographical perspective, there are still several countries in close neighbourhood to Europe in an unstable, almost warlike status or maybe to be considered as failed states, (e.g. Libya and Syria). The situation in all these countries has already and will have for sure in the future a knock-on effect on the security situation in Europe.

And not to forget the topic of BREXIT. Here we will experience the real impact most likely only in the years to come.

Unfortunately, all these emerging challenges from the recent years add only up to all our traditional challenges in law enforcement, e.g. various forms of serious and organised crime, various forms of mobile criminal groups, environmental crime, corruption, and so on.

However, regardless of the dynamically evolving threat landscape, the citizens of the European Union can expect for good reasons results from the law enforcement communities to deliver on security in an open and free Europe. Even when law enforcement cultures are often described as being quite conservative, I do trust that we will take this as an opportunity to showcase that our services can adjust as fast as possible to deal in a pragmatic way with the full landscape of challenges.

This requires that all organisations and services engaged in the law enforcement cooperation constantly scrutinise their preparedness, their processes and procedures and their results achieved to aim for a further improvement. I am well aware that this may sound too easy and simplistic. However, understanding the still fractured landscape of law enforcement services in Europe and their very diverse operational and legal conditions on the national level, it is obvious that we as law enforcement communities in Europe are by now to be as agile as required under the described scenarios.

Here I would like to highlight two examples of the mechanisms and tools on the EU level, which are useful for moving forward to get up to speed in this dynamic environment.

The European Union has already decided to upgrade the various EU IT systems on internal security so that they will be fit for the future purpose. Additionally the EU is ambitious to add in the coming years a new, to be developed, interoperability package, to these systems. The aim is to enable that an end user will receive results from all searchable EU databases in this context and the data systems can mutually support and complement each other. Everyone who was engaged into the development of national law enforcement databases can imagine how ambitious this will be on European level.

In this case the European Commission, the leading agency euLISA, supported by FRONTEX, EUROPOL and CEPOL, are all strongly committed to bring the revision of the existing data systems and the new interoperability package forward.

From the perspective of CEPOL as law enforcement training provider it is essential that we do not underestimate the importance of a sufficient support to our end users by training components, when we roll out such improved or new large scale IT systems. Only when the end users are fully aware of the potential and limitations of such systems, they are in a position to apply and fully utilise the expected advantages. Here the major burden in relation to the training for the new systems needs to be carried by national structures. However, a strong support from the EU level, e.g. provided by CEPOL, could be most useful to harmonise the usage and application of the systems across Europe.

Now we are still in ongoing consultations to receive the necessary means for such an important task to provide those services in due time to all Member States. However, we are fully committed to team up with our partner Justice and Home Affairs agencies and with our partners from the Member States to contribute to the success of this important development.

As a second example, I would like to elaborate in short how we are constantly adjusting our business scope and our processes to the changing environment. When CEPOL started its existence as an EU agency back in 2006, the services offered were focussed on senior police officials to facilitate a common platform for contacts and to raise awareness of the tools and instruments of police cooperation in Europe. CEPOL has seen different steps in evolution of the mandate and as well on its business volume and focus. In the current status CEPOL delivers services to the different law enforcement communities in Europe based on priorities identified with data from sound training needs assessment tools. The agency brings the different professional communities closer together and has moved with its scope very close to the direct support of operational needs in cross-border cooperation of our services. This is not only evidenced that we have dedicated over 40 % of our resources to the engagement in the different EMPACT priorities. The challenges described earlier are included in our constant environment scan and the strategic aim to offer excellent tailor-made services to our partners in the EU Member States. We strive towards excellence across our services. This is underlined by achieving ISO 9001 certification for the management of our residential and online services and by the achievement of ISO 29993 certification for selected training services.

In our organisation, like in many other law enforcement training institutions, we do need to constantly evaluate our training services. This is not always easy or simple, especially as we have to operate, like many of our partners from Member States, with rather very limited resources. Additionally, the bureaucratic requirements for an EU agency do not necessarily provide a very convenient basis for innovation and constant business adjustment. However, over the last decade we have already delivered several innovative services, e.g. webinars, online-courses, European Joint Master Programme, online library with a large volume of electronic journal and electronic books and successful models of blended learning.

All the success in the recent years was only possible based on very trustful and committed cooperation with our partners from the Members States and the EU institutions.

As our latest innovation I am proud that we could open in June here in Budapest the CEPOL Cybercrime Academy. Taking into account the upcoming challenges for the law enforcement communities in Europe on cybercrime and digital competences, it is vital that we now have the infrastructure in place to service the communities in the future on a larger scale.

We can now train on a very modern technical platform up to 100 participants in one seminar or course. The results of our operational training needs assessment on cybercrime has revealed that approx. 160.000 officials from our law enforcement communities require training on this topic. And I do personally expect that this demand will grow for sure in the next years.

I am also looking forward that we can bring our new electronic learning platform live by 2020.

So in summary, a constant re-arrangement of our approach on law enforcement training is required in this challenging dynamic environment. Already by now, as described, several developments on European level are on the way to support our communities.

However, this will require in the future an even closer link to research and science and to academic institutions, seeking their input and in support of delivering the best possible services for the European citizens.

Sincerely,

Dr. h.c. Detlef Schröder