

Welcome Address

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European Commission



Good morning!

First, congratulations to CEPOL and to Executive Director Montserrat Marín for your appointment. New leadership brings new energy and new vision.

CEPOL has an important task. All of our crime-fighting efforts across Europe, across borders, depend on police officers having the skills they need. I thank you especially for your training programmes.

Trafficking is a terrible crime and CEPOL plays a vital role in this fight. You alert police to the dangers of trafficking in human beings. Thanks to your training activities, police can fight and prevent trafficking by learning to spot the danger signs. A trafficker can sell a weapon only once, but can sell a woman's body again and again and again. Older men offering shelter only to young women. Children travelling with people who are not their parents. On the first day after Russia attacked Ukraine, I immediately placed the fight against trafficking on top of the European agenda. When millions of people are on the move, traffickers target vulnerable people.

Our joint European fight is having results and that is how a small agency can make a big difference. The fight against crime is often local but in order to succeed, we must think and work continental.

This is certainly true for your topic today, the fight against crime in a digital age. CEPOL provides a crucial link between security research and everyday policing, by working in the EU innovation HUB for internal security and by teaching police officers to use digital tools.

CEPOL also makes a big difference by shaping a European culture of law enforcement. You train the leaders, you train the trainers, and you bring crime fighters and experts, practitioners and educators together. Like today at this conference.

The Research and Science Conference is very important; the first one in 5 years, during which time our world – particularly online – has changed. It is now your turn to change the world.

In the coming 3 days you will discuss an impressive number of issues with one goal in common: to keep Europe safe.

Your work will shape police work on the ground and inspire many policies.

In turn, I wish you a very inspiring conference.