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The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) research and science conferences have, over the years, evolved into a recognised European platform where law enforcement practitioners, researchers, academic scholars and policy experts meet to exchange research findings, operational insights and forward-looking perspectives. They embody our conviction that effective law enforcement in Europe must be grounded in evidence, strengthened by interdisciplinary dialogue and inspired by innovation.

The conference 'Tackling the world of high-risk criminal networks', held last year in Ostia (Italy), once again confirmed the value of this approach. Bringing together experts from academia, law enforcement authorities, EU institutions and international partners, the event provided a timely and in-depth exploration of how criminal networks evolve, adapt and entrench themselves within our societies. The presentations and debates demonstrated that high-risk criminal networks (HRCNs) are neither static nor confined to one domain; rather, they operate across borders and sectors, and increasingly across physical and digital environments.

This special conference edition of the *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin* captures the richness and diversity of those discussions. The contributions presented here reflect the complexity of today's organised crime landscape and underline the necessity of holistic, research-informed responses.

Taken together, the contributions in this edition demonstrate that HRCNs are adaptive, multilayered and increasingly embedded within legitimate economic and digital systems. They require responses that are equally adaptive, rooted in research and supported by strong cooperation at the national, European and international levels.

For CEPOL, fostering this dialogue between research and practice remains a core mission. By providing a platform for the dissemination of empirical findings and innovative approaches, we aim to strengthen the professional development of law enforcement officials and to support a more predictive, agile and resilient European law enforcement community.

I warmly invite you to engage with the articles presented in this edition. They offer not only analytical depth but also practical insights that can inform strategy, training and operational work.

We hope this publication inspires further research, strengthens cross-border cooperation and contributes to our shared commitment to protecting the security and integrity of our societies.

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