

# JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS AGENCIES NETWORK

➤ **FINAL REPORT 2023**

# The Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network



The EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training  
(CEPOL)



The European Institute for Gender Equality  
(EIGE)



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and  
Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)



The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)



The EU Agency for the Operational Management  
of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of  
Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA)



The EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation  
(Eurojust)



The EU Agency for Law Enforcement  
Cooperation (Europol)



The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)



The European Border and Coast Guard Agency  
(Frontex)



# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Foreword by the Executive Director of the EUAA .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>About the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Timeline.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Meetings.....</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1.	Horizontal meetings.....	13
5.1.1.	Heads of Agencies meeting .....	13
5.1.2.	Crisis Communication Coaching for Heads of Agencies .....	13
5.1.3.	JHAAN Trio meetings with the incoming Council presidency .....	13
5.1.4.	Contact Point Meetings .....	13
5.1.5.	Trio coordination meetings .....	14
5.2.	Working Group meetings .....	14
5.2.1.	Working Group on Communication and Workshop on communication with Member States, 8 & 9 June .....	15
5.2.2.	Working Group on ICT and Cybersecurity, 6 July 2023.....	15
5.2.3.	Working Group on Data Protection, 20 April 2023 and 11 December 2023 .....	16
5.2.4.	Working Group on External Relations: 12 October 2023 .....	16
5.2.5.	Working Group on training, 21 September 2023 .....	16
5.2.6.	Working Group on European Situation Monitoring, 17 & 18 October 2023 .....	17
5.2.7.	Informal Security Officers Network, 8 March 2023 and 13 September 2023 .....	17
<b>6.</b>	<b>Thematic events .....</b>	<b>19</b>
6.1.	Digitalisation .....	19
6.1.1.	Conference on digital innovation, 13 & 14 June 2023 .....	19
6.1.2.	Digital Learning and Learning Technologies Ecosystem in JHA Agencies, 19 & 20 October 2023.....	20
6.2.	Implementation of the European Green Deal in JHA Agencies.....	20
6.3.	Information provision in mixed migration situations .....	21
6.3.1.	Survey on Information provision.....	21
6.3.2.	Seminar on Information Provision (“How”), 1 & 2 June 2023.....	21
6.3.3.	Seminar on Information Provision (“What”), 16 November 2023 .....	22





6.4.	Cybersecurity.....	22
6.4.1.	Technical cybersecurity exercise, 4 May 2023 .....	22
6.4.2.	Cybersecurity exercise for managers, 19 September 2023.....	23
6.4.3.	Exchange on cybersecurity at executive level.....	23
6.5.	JHAAN Communication and promotion .....	24
6.5.1.	Staff Exchange Programme .....	24
6.5.2.	Meeting on Reporting Methodologies, 5 July 2023 .....	24
6.5.3.	Open Market Event, 22 September 2023.....	25
6.5.4.	Exchange on Single Programming Documents (SPD) good practices, 24 November 2023 .....	25
6.5.5.	JHAAN Brussels Briefing, 5 December 2023.....	25
6.5.6.	JHAAN promotional products: video, brochure and newsletter .....	26
<b>7.</b>	<b>Other activities.....</b>	<b>27</b>
7.1.	Annual exchange of JHA Agencies on the charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union .....	27
<b>8.</b>	<b>Network products .....</b>	<b>28</b>
8.1.	Joint paper on the Agencies' contributions to the EU's solidarity with Ukraine	28
<b>9.</b>	<b>Highlights of inter-agency cooperation in 2023.....</b>	<b>29</b>
9.1.	Close cooperation in drugs-related training between CEPOL and EMCDDA, including shared use of on-line resources.....	29
9.2.	Europol-Eurojust cooperation in the area of core international crimes .....	29
9.3.	EUAA-FRA joint publications for guardians of unaccompanied children .....	29
9.4.	Frontex, Europol and Eurojust involvement in EMPACT Operational Actions Plans .....	30
9.5.	FRA-EIGE joint implementation of the Violence against Women Survey II .....	30
9.6.	eu-LISA cooperation with Frontex, Eurojust and Europol on enhanced Schengen Information System (SIS).....	31
9.7.	Continued JHA Agencies cooperation within the EU Innovation Hub for internal security hosted by Europol .....	31
9.8.	eu-LISA Data Centre hosting services for Frontex and EUAA.....	31
9.9.	EUAA-EMCDDA joint analysis of substance use by applicants in reception contexts in EU+ countries .....	32
9.10.	CEPOL, FRA and Frontex contributions to development of the EUAA's Let's speak asylum project.....	32
9.11.	FRA and the Fundamental Rights Officers from EUAA, Europol and Frontex begin regular exchanges .....	33





9.12.	ELGE and Eurojust join forces for a common project on the European Protection Order .....	33
<b>10.</b>	<b>Priorities for 2024 .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>35</b>
11.1.	Relex Infographics .....	35
11.2.	EMPACT Infographics.....	36







# 1. Foreword by the Executive Director of the EUAA

The European Union Agency for Asylum took up the chairmanship of the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network (JHAAN) in January 2023. Internal preparations for this role started early in 2022 with the commitment to further extend inter-agency cooperation in different areas. In that spirit, the EUAA prepared an ambitious programme for 2023.



The EUAA's presidency of the network came at a testing time for Europe. Fresh out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine brought war back to our doorstep. This has led to an increase in migratory pressure and a mass displacement of persons from Ukraine, imperilment of fundamental rights and new security-related challenges, including new cyber threats. Moreover, since October 2023, we witnessed a very worrying situation developing in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, we continue being confronted by the ongoing climate crisis. Despite our increased efforts to mitigate its impact on our ecosystems and communities, it remains a pressing concern for all of us. Furthermore, the world is rapidly embracing increased digitalisation and the use of artificial intelligence, which has continued its course of growth and expansion across various sectors worldwide (e.g., in the area of e-learning, cybersecurity, governance, healthcare, justice and so on).

Against this background, and in line with the agreed Trio Presidency priorities for 2022-2024, the EUAA, together with the network, focused on five key priorities in 2023: digitalisation; the implementation of the EU Green Deal in JHA Agencies; information provision in mixed migration situations; cybersecurity, and communication and promotion of the network. Various activities were foreseen under each of these priorities, with the clear aim to foster inter-agency cooperation and to contribute, in a meaningful way and within the remit of the individual mandates of the JHA Agencies, to the overall EU response to these challenges.

Throughout the past year, the individual actions of the JHA Agencies as well as their collective efforts have been instrumental in addressing many of the above challenges. Examples are wide ranging and include fostering enhanced law enforcement cooperation; combating transnational crime, terrorism and preventing exploitation; further cooperation on illicit drug-related issues; new initiatives to jointly tackle cybersecurity threats; joint efforts for promotion and protection of fundamental rights, including protection of the most vulnerable groups; tackling gender inequalities, and the protection of personal data.

This report captures the network's activities in 2023, the progress made, and common milestones achieved. It underlines the steady commitment of the JHA family to upholding the fundamental rights, freedoms, justice and security of all individuals within the European Union.



I extend my deepest gratitude to all the JHA agencies, their dedicated personnel, and the stakeholders whose firm support has fuelled this collaborative journey. I hope this report serves to guide future endeavours, inspiring continued cooperation, and excellence in the pursuit of a safer, more just, and unified Europe. I wish Agnès Diallo, Executive Director of eu-LISA and her team the best of luck with the chairmanship of the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network during 2024.

Nina Gregori

Executive Director of EUAA





## 2. About the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network

**The Justice and Home Affairs Agencies Network** was established in 2010 and today it includes nine EU agencies working in the field of justice and home affairs<sup>1</sup>. Within the network, agencies cooperate on different topics in the areas where their work is complementary such as migration, asylum, external border management, fundamental rights, gender equality, the fight against organised crime, illicit drugs and drugs addiction, countering terrorism, as well as ensuring the functioning of relevant EU IT systems and law enforcement training. To foster inter-institutional dialogue and overall horizontal coordination at EU level, five observers<sup>2</sup> participate in the network's meetings.

Over time, the network has developed its way of working – the functioning of the JHAAN is organised through regular meetings at horizontal level and through several working groups, which facilitate cooperation and finding synergies at expert level. The network has also developed a set of tools and products, which are updated on a yearly basis, to inform its main stakeholders about individual and joint work of the agencies on different topics in a comprehensive manner.

In 2021, the network adopted the JHAAN Assessment report which described key achievements of the network and provided a set of recommendations to ensure better coordination inside and outside of the network, to improve its functioning and to increase the network's visibility.

One of the concrete results of these recommendations was the establishment of a **Trio Presidency concept** which was introduced at the beginning of 2022. This concept brings three consecutive presidencies close together to enhance continuity and coordination in the network from one year to another. The first Trio is composed of CEPOL, EUAA and eu-LISA, covers the period 2022-2024. At the beginning of that period, the three agencies agreed on three priority topics which would be reflected in the programmes developed by the respective agencies for the network during this period. These Trio priorities included digitalisation and its different dimensions; business continuity, and implementation of the EU Green Deal.

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<sup>1</sup> CEPOL, EIGE, EMCDDA, EUAA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA and Frontex.

<sup>2</sup> DG HOME, DG JUST, EEAS, LIBE Secretariat, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU.







### 3. Executive summary

The EUAA identified five **main priorities for the JHAAN in 2023**: digitalisation; the implementation of the EU Green Deal in JHA Agencies; information provision in mixed migration situations; cybersecurity; communication and promotion of the network. Under each priority, the EUAA initiated and organised several activities.

Under the **digitalisation** priority, the EUAA organised a digitalisation conference on 13 and 14 June in Malta to discuss digital innovation in the field of asylum and migration and the current state of play while looking at examples from the Member States and several JHA Agencies. The second activity was the meeting on Digital Learning and Learning Technologies Ecosystem in JHA Agencies organised on 19 and 20 October (hybrid), which brought together experts in the digital learning field to discuss trends and latest developments and to prepare the ground for further collaboration.

As regards **the implementation of the EU Green Deal**, a survey was carried out among the JHA Agencies to take stock of their environmental and greening activities leading to the publication of a [report](#) of the findings in July 2023. The report was subsequently presented and discussed among the network contact points, who also debated further follow up by future JHAAN presidencies.

The EUAA organised various activities under the third priority: **the provision of information in mixed migration situations**. Firstly, the agency gathered information from the other JHA Agencies on their information provision activities by way of a survey, on the basis of which two seminars on the topic were organised. The first seminar took place on 1 and 2 June (hybrid) and looked at how to provide information in mixed migration settings. The second seminar focused on what information to provide in such situations. This meeting took place fully online on 15 November. Both seminars allowed experts from JHA Agencies and the Commission to discuss information provision techniques and practices and also to focus on topics such as trafficking in human beings, fake news, disinformation and the situation in Ukraine. During both seminars, further opportunities for cooperation were identified.

The **cybersecurity** priority proved to be another highly important topic. In today's interconnected world, a cyber incident in one agency or a Member State can have effects across the whole of the EU, making cybersecurity a shared responsibility. During the year, the EUAA organised two cybersecurity exercises for the first time solely among JHA Agencies. A first exercise focusing on technical knowledge within the agencies was organised online on 4 May and a second table-top exercise targeting managers from JHA Agencies responsible for IT and business continuity took place during a hybrid meeting hosted in Malta on 19 September. Furthermore, cybersecurity was also addressed at the executive level, during the Heads of Agencies meeting on 21 November, where Executive Directors and senior representatives from JHA Agencies exchanged their views on this topic.

Under the fifth and final priority, **communication and promotion of the JHAAN**, the EUAA organised activities around different topics. One set of activities focused on boosting inter-agency discussions in different fields, such as a meeting on reporting methodologies for drafting annual reports on 5 July (hybrid) and an exchange of good practices in drafting the



SPD on 24 November (online). Another category of activities and events aimed to increase knowledge about the network internally and externally. The objective was to generate more cooperation and coordination among the network members and also with its stakeholders. This included the Communication Multipliers' Network meeting of 9 June (hybrid), an Open Market event for EU staff on 22 September (online) and the Brussels briefing to bring together JHA Agencies and their main stakeholders on 5 December (Brussels). The network launched its first staff exchange programme which was successfully conducted in 2023 with almost 60 members of the agencies' staff participating in this pilot. To consolidate the communication and promotion activities, a new promotional [video](#) of the network, an updated JHAAN [brochure](#) and a [JHAAN newsletter](#) were produced to increase awareness about the activities of the network and individual agencies.

As part of its general responsibilities as the chairing agency, the EUAA organised annual meetings of both horizontal and expert nature. Three regular contact points meetings were organised in March (hybrid), June (online) and September (hybrid), while ad hoc meetings were organised when needed (January and October online). These meetings serve as the main platform to coordinate the network's activities and discuss relevant strategic topics. In addition, experts on different topics gathered under the umbrella of different JHAAN working groups, which all met at least once in 2023.

The highlight of the horizontal meetings was the JHAAN Heads of Agencies meeting held at the EUAA's headquarters in Malta on 21 November. It brought together senior representatives of JHA Agencies, Network observers, the incoming Belgian Presidency of the Council, and the EU Agencies Network to exchange on recent and upcoming developments in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, to discuss priority topics of the network, and draw conclusions for future engagements. Prior to their annual meeting, on 20 November, senior representatives of JHA Agencies participated in a crisis communication coaching session, which included theoretical components on crisis communication principles and strategies, as well as practical exercises to apply these strategies.

The EUAA also continued the initiative introduced as a result of the JHAAN Assessment Report 2021 and organised **Trio Executive Directors meetings with the incoming presidencies in the Council**. These meetings aim at enhancing the visibility of the JHAAN by promoting its activities and priorities and exploring potential support from the network and individual agencies for the work of the incoming Council Presidency. The meeting with the Permanent Representative of Spain took place on 8 June and the meeting with the Permanent Representative of Belgium took place on 5 December. In addition, Trio presidency meetings at the level of the contact points from CEPOL, eu-LISA and EUAA were held on several occasions to coordinate the network's activities, with online meetings organised on 25 January, 17 February, 26 May and 31 August.

The EUAA Presidency of the JHAAN also continued with the initiative launched in 2022 following Russia's military aggression in Ukraine and compiled an updated overview of how the nine JHA Agencies support the EU, the Member States and several EU partners (third countries and international organisations) with consequences resulting from this unjustified aggression. [The Joint paper on the JHA Agencies' contribution to EU solidarity with Ukraine](#) was published in March.



## List of events organised in 2023 by the Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network



**25**  
JANUARY

Trio Contact Points Coordination Meeting

**30**  
JANUARY

Ad hoc JHAAN Contact Points meeting on information provision

**17**  
FEBRUARY

Trio Contact Points Coordination Meeting

**22**  
FEBRUARY

Presentation of the EUAA Presidency activities and JHAAN priorities for 2023 to COSI

**17**  
MARCH

Regular JHAAN Contact Points meeting

**22**  
MARCH

Presentation of EUAA Presidency activities and JHAAN priorities for 2023 to LIBE

**20**  
APRIL

Meeting of the Working Group on Data Protection

**04**  
MAY

Technical JHA agencies' Cybersecurity Exercise

**26**  
MAY

Trio Contact Points Coordination Meeting

**01  
& 02**  
JUNE

Seminar on Information Provision ("How")

**08**  
JUNE

Trio Heads of Agencies meeting with the incoming Spanish Presidency

**08**  
JUNE

Meeting of the Working group on communication

**09**  
JUNE

Workshop on communication with Member States

**12**  
JUNE

Regular JHAAN Contact Points Meeting

**13  
& 14**  
JUNE

Digitalisation Conference

**05**  
JULY

Meeting on Reporting Methodologies

**06**  
JULY

Meeting of the Working Group on ICT and Cybersecurity

**12**  
AUGUST

Trio Contact Points Coordination Meeting

**05**  
SEPTEMBER

Regular JHAAN Contact Points meeting

**19**  
SEPTEMBER

Cybersecurity Exercise for Managers



**21**  
SEPTEMBER | Meeting of the Working Group on Training

**22**  
SEPTEMBER | JHAAN Open Market Event

**12**  
OCTOBER | Meeting of the Working Group on External Relations (RELEX)

**17 & 18**  
OCTOBER | Meeting of the Working Group on European Situation Monitoring

**19 & 20**  
OCTOBER | Digital Learning and Learning Technologies Ecosystem in JHA agencies

**25**  
OCTOBER | Ad hoc JHAAN Contact Points meeting

**15**  
NOVEMBER | Seminar on Information Provision ("What")

**20**  
NOVEMBER | Crisis Communication Coaching for Heads of JHA agencies

**21**  
NOVEMBER | JHAAN Heads of Agencies meeting

**24**  
NOVEMBER | Exchange on Single Programming Document (SPD) good practices

**05**  
DECEMBER | Trio Heads of Agencies meeting with the incoming Belgian Presidency

**05**  
DECEMBER | JHAAN Brussels Briefing

**11**  
DECEMBER | 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on Data Protection

**13**  
DECEMBER | Annual exchange of JHA agencies on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

**Q1-2**  
2024 | Presentation of the JHAAN Annual Report 2023 to COSI

**Q1-2**  
2024 | Presentation of the JHAAN Annual Report 2023 to LIBE Committee



## 5. Meetings

### 5.1. Horizontal meetings

#### 5.1.1. Heads of Agencies meeting

Senior representatives of JHA Agencies, the network's observers as well as the incoming Belgian Presidency of the Council, and the representative of the EU Agencies Network, gathered at the EUAA's headquarters in Malta on 21 November for the Heads of Agencies meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange views on recent and upcoming developments of note in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, to discuss the priority topics of the network, building on what was achieved in 2023 at working level, and to draw conclusions for future engagements. It was also an opportunity for the Heads of JHA Agencies to discuss the most pressing matters of common interest. The EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, addressed the participants of the meeting by video message.

#### 5.1.2. Crisis Communication Coaching for Heads of Agencies

On 20 November at the EUAA's headquarters in Valletta, Malta, senior representatives of JHA Agencies participated in an in-person, high-level coaching session on communicating in diverse situations of crisis. The session combined the theory of key crisis communication principles and strategies and the application of these strategies and theories in practice.

#### 5.1.3. JHAAN Trio meetings with the incoming Council presidency

Based on a recommendation from the JHAAN Assessment Report of 2021, the EUAA continued with the recent practice of organising high level meetings with the incoming Presidencies of the Council of the European Union. This initiative started in 2022 and the aim of such meetings is to enhance the visibility of the JHAAN, raise awareness about the network's activities, promote current and future priorities of the network and to explore how the network and individual agencies can potentially support the work of the incoming Council Presidency.

In 2023, Executive Directors (or their alternates) of the Trio presidency (CEPOL, EUAA, eu-LISA) met with the incoming Spanish presidency represented by Permanent Representative of Spain to the EU, H.E. Alonso Alonso on 8 June and with the incoming Belgian Presidency, represented by Permanent Representative of Belgium to the EU, H.E. Van de Voorde on 5 December. Both meetings fulfilled their aim and led to the establishment of closer contacts between the network and the incoming Presidencies.

#### 5.1.4. Contact Point Meetings

Contact point meetings are the main platform to coordinate the network's activities and to discuss the strategic topics of relevance to JHA Agencies. During the EUAA Presidency of the JHAAN in 2023, three regular contact point meetings were organised: two in-person meetings in Malta (March, September, both with a possibility of remote participation if



needed) and one fully online (June), in line with the recommendations from the JHAAN Assessment report of 2021.

As per establish practice, during contact point meetings, participants informed each other about the latest developments and activities within their organisations. Other topics included: regular updates on the past and upcoming meetings and activities of the network by the Presidency; discussion on a JHAAN joint paper on the JHA Agencies' contribution to EU solidarity with Ukraine and the way forward; organisation and implementation of the JHAAN Staff Exchange Programme and/or discussion on status of implementation of the Recommendations from the 10-year JHAAN Assessment Report of 2021.

In addition to the regular meetings, two ad hoc contact point meetings were dedicated to different topics which required more extensive discussions. One meeting focused on the information provision priority and one on joint preparation of the Heads of Agencies meeting.

Apart from regular attendees from the JHA Agencies, network observers (European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), European External Action Service (EEAS), Secretariat of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee) and General Secretariat of the Council of the EU (GSC) participated in the regular contact point meetings. Additionally, the meeting in March was also attended by the Shared Support Office of the EU Agencies Network (EUAN).

### 5.1.5. Trio coordination meetings

In addition to the contact point meetings attended by all JHA Agencies representatives, the EUAA organised several meetings among Trio Presidency contact points (CEPOL, EUAA, eu-LISA) to ensure coordination among the three agencies. In total, four meetings were organised and participants discussed various topics, e.g. organisational aspects of the presidency (lessons learned shared by CEPOL); JHAAN presentations in LIBE and COSI; organisation of events by the Presidency, and publication of the JHAAN joint paper on the JHA Agencies' contribution to EU solidarity with Ukraine.

## 5.2. Working Group meetings

Meetings of the JHAAN working groups serve as a forum for various thematic discussions at expert level. The EUAA organised and chaired meetings of the following working groups:

- Working Group on Communications
- Working Group on ICT and Cybersecurity
- Working Group on Data Protection
- Working Group on External Relations (RELEX)

The Network contains other working groups, which have permanent chairs who are responsible for organising their meetings each year:

- Working Group on Training, chaired by CEPOL
- Working Group on European Situation Monitoring, chaired by Frontex



In addition, security officers from JHA Agencies meet under the informal Security Officers Network (as agreed by the JHA Heads of Agencies in November 2022), led by eu-LISA.

### **5.2.1. Working Group on Communication and Workshop on communication with Member States, 8 & 9 June**

In June, the EUAA organised back-to-back meetings of the JHAAN Working Group on Communication and the agency's own Communication Multipliers' Network. The meetings took place in-person and online, with most attendees participating physically.

During the JHAAN Working Group on Communication, which took place on 8 June, the JHA Agencies and the Commission's representatives discussed best practices as well as ongoing communication campaigns focussed on key deliverables, either at agency level or EU level. Presentations included communicating on the European Drug Report, and the challenges of implementing, and then raising public awareness of the EU's large scale information systems: EES, ETIAS and SIS. Eurojust provided an overview of its rapidly expanding activities, including the effect of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The meeting of the EUAA Communication Multipliers' Network, which took place on 9 June, brought together representatives from 13 Member States, the JHA Agencies and the European Commission to discuss challenges around communicating highly sensitive migration policies, crisis communication, and pressure on national administrations responsible for asylum and reception. The EUAA presented its key campaigns, including some developed together with the European Commission: #StandWithUkraine and #GetItRight. During the afternoon, participants were given a presentation by an external expert on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on communication and public relations. This enabled them to hold a first reflection on this topic, as national administrations evaluate the possible use of AI tools in their own campaigns and activities.

### **5.2.2. Working Group on ICT and Cybersecurity, 6 July 2023**

The meeting of the Working Group on ICT and Cybersecurity took place online on 6 July 2023. Apart from the EUAA, participants included colleagues from CEPOL, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA and Frontex, as well as the European Commission's cybersecurity coordinator for DG HOME and DG JUST.

During the meeting, attendees provided an update on the latest developments in their organisations related to ICT and the cybersecurity field. The EUAA presented past or foreseen cybersecurity activities of the network in 2023. Under thematic presentations, Eurojust informed the group about the technical developments related to Core International Crimes Evidence Database (CICED), eu-LISA presented work conducted by the informal Security Officers Network in 2023 and the EUAA shared experience with technical aspects related to the transition of the EUAA's Information and Documentation System (IDS) into a public platform. Furthermore, participants held a roundtable discussion on AI and the use of AI tools.

### **5.2.3. Working Group on Data Protection, 20 April 2023 and 11 December 2023**

The first meeting of the Working Group on Data Protection was held online on 20 April 2023, chaired by the EUAA and attended by the Data Protection Officer functions of CEPOL, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA, Frontex and of one non-JHAAN member, namely the European Public Prosecutor's Office, EPPO. The meeting provided an opportunity for the participants to share updates on the data protection work carried out in their respective organisations. Specific topics presented pertained to the data protection provisions in the EUAA Regulation as well as in the mandate of Eurojust.

The second meeting took place online on 11 December 2023, and was attended by the Data Protection Officer (DPO) functions of CEPOL, EIGE, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA, Frontex and EPPO. The EUAA was the chairing agency and took the opportunity to introduce its newly appointed Data Protection Officer who gave a short presentation on the 5-year mark reached by the GDPR and EUDPR. A lively tour de table and subsequent exchanges highlighted the increased workload for most of the JHA Agencies. As recognised by all participants, interaction with the EDPS is an important part of a DPO's work, therefore it was considered appropriate to keep exploring new ways of streamlining the cooperation with the EDPS.

### **5.2.4. Working Group on External Relations: 12 October 2023**

The meeting of the JHAAN Working Group on External Relations (RELEX) was held online on 12 October 2023, chaired by the EUAA and with CEPOL, EIGE, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, FRA, Frontex in attendance, as well as representatives from DG HOME, DG INTPA, DG NEAR, and EEAS. As usual, this annual meeting served as a platform for sharing updates on existing relations and cooperation activities with partner countries and international organisations, with a view to enhance coordination and synergies among the agencies.

During this year's session, discussions covered new developments in legal frameworks and in the relations with partners; agencies' contributions to Joint Programming and Team Europe Initiatives; experiences and models of cooperation with Member States and International Organisations, and the integration of Western Balkan partners in line with the European Council conclusions of June 2022.

The meeting was productive, addressing critical issues, sharing experiences, and emphasising the need for better coordination and structured involvement in external cooperation programmes. Many positive experiences were shared concerning the integration of Western Balkan partners. In relation to the need for better coordination, COM will explore possible ways to institutionalise and structure the input of the agencies in the joint policy and programming processes.

### **5.2.5. Working Group on training, 21 September 2023**

The meeting of the Working Group on Training took place in a hybrid format on 21 September 2023 at CEPOL's headquarters in Budapest. On the occasion of the European Year of Skills, this was the first time CEPOL opened up the meeting to other training providers outside of the JHA area. The event was attended by EMCDDA, EUAA, eu-LISA, Europol and Frontex from



the JHA Agencies, while representative/s of EPPO, EUCPN, ENISA, EUIPO, ETF and EMSA also joined the meeting.

The event started with the regular tour de table of the JHA Agencies. Firstly, CEPOL presented the outcomes of the EU-STNA mid-term review, its implementation by agencies, followed by a discussion on how to better use the EU-STNA outcomes for training design. During the discussions, the evaluation of activities and quality assurance emerged as reoccurring issues and points of common interests. Furthermore, CEPOL shared information on its draft 2024 training portfolio and the new e-learning products. CEPOL's International Cooperation Unit provided an overview of its capacity-building projects in third countries, focusing on priorities, best practices, and common challenges. Further topics of the meeting included a presentation of CEPOL's future Higher Education product, lessons learnt/tips and a presentation by EUIPO of the online modules on IPRs.

### **5.2.6. Working Group on European Situation Monitoring, 17 & 18 October 2023**

During the meeting organised by Frontex on 17-18 October, participants from eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, EUAA and Frontex were presented with the work of Frontex Situation Centre. This included its roles, tasks and the organisation of the respective Situation Rooms; the use of open sources; interoperability in information exchange; tools used to share/disseminate/exchange classified and unclassified information; the sharing of catalogues of services; the mapping of the reports delivered by Operational/Situation Centres and sharing best practices in information exchange.

Presentations were followed by discussions and the exchange of viewpoints. The meeting ended with a final conclusion on the need to adapt and increase organisational developments and changes within operational/situation/coordination centres in line with current technological achievements. Tools based on Artificial Intelligence for situation monitoring are becoming publicly available and used daily by different organisations within the private sector. For various reasons, the implementation of such advanced technologies in the public sector is much slower. The participants agreed that although AI tools are not widely used at present, they are inevitably entering our working environments and will have a huge impact in the near future, rapidly changing the workflows in situational monitoring.

### **5.2.7. Informal Security Officers Network, 8 March 2023 and 13 September 2023**

The informal Justice and Home Affairs Security Officers Working Group met twice in 2023 at the eu-LISA Liaison Office in Brussels. Established as a temporary working group, it brings together security officers from the JHA Agencies to exchange good practices, discuss and cooperate on common operational security challenges. Examples include information security tasks and business continuity areas. The objective is to provide joint professional advice and guidance on the development of shared procedures and responses to security incidents, and to support each other in conducting joint risk assessments. This will provide better understanding of common threats, thus facilitating a more effective and aligned response to security incidents.





During the meeting on 8 March 2023, the group gathered to discuss the following topics: assessment of the group scope and mandate; information sharing regarding the current geo-political situation, the Information Security Regulation, and exchange of practices concerning EU classified information (EUCI). The meeting was chaired by eu-LISA and joined by 9 representatives from EMCDDA, EUAA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, and FRA. Key outcomes of the meeting included refocusing the scope of the group mandate on operational and information security and business continuity to better reflect the needs arising from current challenges and establishing a set of different action items such as setting up an encrypted platform to facilitate information sharing on specified security topics. Examples include travel security or establishing a list of contact points of security officers including stand-by contact points.

The second meeting on 13 September 2023 was in hybrid format. The meeting was chaired by eu-LISA and brought together 10 colleagues from CEPOL, EMCDDA, EUAA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, and FRA. During the meeting, the participants agreed on the revised scope and mandate for the group. They discussed requirements concerning EUCI stemming from the Information Security Regulation and exchanged information on EUCI practices. They also revised and updated the action list agreed on at the previous meeting. One example was to establish a common paper on how to handle Sensitive Non-Classified Information (SNC) between each other in the JHA area and Member States.

During the Head of Agencies meeting held on 21 November 2023, it was decided to continue discussions regarding the formal establishment of the working group during the presidency of eu-LISA.





## 6. Thematic events

The EUAA chose five priority topics for the network to focus on in 2023. After consulting with all members and observers of the network, the programme was formally endorsed by the Heads of all JHA Agencies, who met in Budapest in November 2022.

The priorities for the JHAAN in 2023 under the EUAA's presidency were:

- Digitalisation in JHA Agencies
- Implementation of the EU Green Deal
- Information provision in mixed migration situations
- Cybersecurity
- JHAAN communication and promotion

### 6.1. Digitalisation

Digitalisation has been one of the central topics for the network for several years. In 2022, the first JHAAN Trio Presidency agreed to keep the topic of digitalisation and its different dimensions as one of the priorities of the network for the period of 2022-2024, in line with the Commission's vision for digital transformation by 2030.

In 2023, the network continued to promote discussions and future initiatives and encouraged the agencies to find synergies and join forces, where relevant.

#### 6.1.1. Conference on digital innovation, 13 & 14 June 2023

A conference on digital innovation was organised by the EUAA, together with GDISC and IGC and with the involvement of JHA Agencies. The aim was to take stock of technological developments and needs centred around the wider context of asylum and migration. The meeting was attended by participants from 24 States including the United States of America. The European Commission, and five other JHA Agencies (eu-LISA, FRA, Eurojust, Frontex, Europol) also took part.

The conference was an opportunity to discuss the state of play of digital innovation in the field of asylum and migration more generally and consider interesting examples from the Member States and different JHA agencies.

More specifically, the meeting focused on the challenges and opportunities of the interconnectivity of systems at national and international levels (e.g., in the context of interoperability of large-scale EU systems) and showcased inspiring cross-border cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs. Building on the lessons learned at a thematic meeting held in 2021, the discussion also touched upon new developments regarding the digitalisation of identification procedures.







From the conference, it follows that digitalisation constitutes a common challenge for public administrations, be it at national or at EU level, in the field of asylum, migration or law enforcement alike. Cooperation in this regard, within the EU and between the EU and partner countries can be mutually beneficial.

### **6.1.2. Digital Learning and Learning Technologies Ecosystem in JHA Agencies, 19 & 20 October 2023**

The EUAA organised a workshop on digital learning and learning technologies ecosystem in JHA Agencies. This meeting took place on 19 and 20 October in Malta and online, convening nine JHA Agencies as well as the Council of Europe to discuss advancements in digital learning.

A survey on digital learning practices and supporting technologies, disseminated among the participating agencies before the event, provided a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in their digital learning strategies and technologies. This survey served as a foundational element for the workshop discussions.

The workshop focused on transforming subject matter expert (SME) content into eLearning and multimedia formats and enhancing trainers' digital content management skills. It also examined the learning technologies ecosystem, identifying digitisation gaps within each agency's training cycle. Agencies shared their latest developments and work through dedicated presentations.

During the meeting, the agencies' e-learning experts exchanged information about the latest developments in the digital learning field and discussed technical aspects of e-learning (design, production of content, learning technologies tools, etc). Participants could also establish inter-agency communication channels among technical experts. After the meeting, very positive feedback was received, and participants expressed their interest in organising a similar meeting next year. eu-LISA included the next meeting in the programme for their presidency in 2024.

## **6.2. Implementation of the European Green Deal in JHA Agencies**

In line with the 2021 JHAAN Heads of Agencies Statement on the implementation of the European Green Deal, the EUAA facilitated further cooperation among JHA Agencies on environmental efforts, as reflected in the agreed list of Trio priority topics for 2022-2024.

On 23 February, the EUAA launched a survey of JHA Agencies' environmental and greening activities. The objectives were to determine the state of play, to identify areas of interest for future activities in this regard by the JHAAN, and to take stock of the agencies' efforts, best practices and lessons learned in becoming registered with the Commission's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

The survey was comprised of 19 questions grouped into four thematic categories:





- EMAS registration and ISO certification
- Agency headquarters and locations
- Building management

#### Missions and operational mandate

The results of the survey provide a baseline of the current state of play across all JHA agencies with regard to their environmental programmes and future agendas that can guide them in planning and prioritising topics for the forthcoming JHAAN presidencies.

The survey results demonstrate the JHA Agencies' shared commitment to stepping up their environmental and greening activities. The JHA Agencies are undoubtedly aware of the institutions' expectations in the areas of environmental protection and sustainability and are likely to increasingly reach out to each other for support and sharing of experiences. A survey report that included three recommendations was shared with the network in July 2023 and can be accessed online [here](#).

## 6.3. Information provision in mixed migration situations

Information provision in mixed migration settings was proposed by the EUAA as one of the thematic priorities for its presidency, in order to emphasise the importance of adequate information provision in these situations. The aim was to exchange information and experiences and to strengthen cooperation between JHA Agencies in this area.

### 6.3.1. Survey on Information provision

In preparation of the two seminars mentioned below, the EUAA launched a survey to collect information on JHA Agencies' activities in relation to information provision. The survey focused on information provision in general, as well as in the specific context of mixed migration. The key findings of the survey were presented during the seminars as background for discussions.

### 6.3.2. Seminar on Information Provision (“How”), 1 & 2 June 2023

A seminar ‘How to provide information in mixed migration contexts’ was held on 1 and 2 June as a hybrid event, taking place at EUAA HQ and online. It was attended by a significant representation from the JHA network (EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Frontex, EIGE, FRA and CEPOL). The objective was to facilitate the exchange of practices and promote potential synergies across JHA Agencies regarding information provision activities, particularly in asylum and mixed-migration contexts.

The first day focused on communication strategies (with the general public as well as asylum seekers); understanding the audience through segmentation and information needs assessment (who), generating productive messages (what information), and how to disseminate it through suitable channels (how to inform).





On the second day, the discussion revolved around the use and mix of different communication channels, good practices on ensuring effective outreach with vulnerable audiences (focus was given to children) as well as on the legal framework underpinning the obligation of providing information (why to inform). During this session, the agencies exchanged views on the development of specific information material and guidance for information providers under development at the EUAA (through ‘Let’s speak asylum’ project) and at Frontex. The discussion proved to be a good basis to reflect on lessons learnt, common approaches and possible synergies in the future.

### **6.3.3. Seminar on Information Provision (“What”), 16 November 2023**

A second seminar organised by the EUAA was on ‘What information to provide in mixed migration settings. It covered relevant information that JHA Agencies provide in such situations and linked up relevant theories, methodologies and practices. This meeting took place online on 16 November. Representatives from CEPOL, eu-LISA, Europol, FRA, Frontex as well as the European Commission participated in the seminar, which provided an excellent opportunity to combine synergies and offer inspiration on the topic.

As with the first seminar, the overall objective of the workshop was to facilitate the exchange of practices and to promote potential synergies across JHA Agencies regarding information provision practices in general, and in the area of asylum and migration and mixed-migration contexts in particular. More specifically, the seminar aimed to provide and share information on techniques and good practices to identify - depending on the target audience - the appropriate content of the message, draft accurate and tailor-made messages, and disseminated messages via appropriate channels.

The seminar started with a session discussing the current situation in Southern Italy, which served as a scene setter for discussing information provision activities in challenging operational contexts and at external borders. The day was further structured around three thematic areas: trafficking in human beings, dealing with fake news and the dissemination of disinformation, and the situation of Ukrainians in the EU+. The specific focus of certain sessions was also based on the outcome of the preparatory survey launched earlier in the year (see paragraph 6.3.1).

## **6.4. Cybersecurity**

The risk of cyberattacks on Member States and other strategic targets, including EU institutions, bodies and agencies, has intensified in the recent years. In addition, digitalisation and interoperability efforts are increasing, thus extending the risks of affecting each other in case of a cyberattack. Therefore, under the EUAA Presidency of the JHAAN in 2023, the network focused on cooperation in the area of cybersecurity with the aim to increase cybersecurity and resilience of the JHA Agencies against potential cyber threats.

### **6.4.1. Technical cybersecurity exercise, 4 May 2023**

An exercise, focusing on probing the technical knowledge within the agencies regarding cybersecurity, was organised by the EUAA on 4 May, online. Twelve colleagues from six



different JHA Agencies, namely CEPOL, EIGE, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Europol, and Frontex joined the event. The exercise brought together IT experts and security officers in a different environment than the regular Working Group on ICT and cybersecurity enabling them to engage in a practical hands-on experience related to cybersecurity and to test their technical knowledge. Aside from a practical part, colleagues were encouraged to discuss current challenges, exchange best practices and to further strengthen cooperation among JHA peers.

The exercise itself was hosted by one of the 'Capture-the-flag' commercial platforms (HTB), which are common platforms in IT to test technical skills. It entailed solving twelve challenges in different categories and at different levels of difficulty (cryptography, forensics, open-source intelligence, reverse engineering, web application security and miscellaneous).

From the anonymous results of the exercise, it follows that there are different levels of technical knowledge among the participants. This is however no indicator of the agencies' cybersecurity capabilities. Participants appreciated having an exercise with a pure focus on technical knowledge and they suggested similar exercises in the future, in a more complex set up and with inter-agency mixed teams.

#### **6.4.2. Cybersecurity exercise for managers, 19 September 2023**

A second cybersecurity exercise was organised for managers on 19 September, in a hybrid format and in close cooperation with eu-LISA. Participants from CEPOL, EIGE, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol, Frontex and FRA joined the exercise.

A table-top exercise took place, composed of a progressing scenario with six injects. The main objective of the exercise was to see how organisations react when there is a potential or real threat, what procedures they follow and how the overall response to an incident is handled. The scenario was hypothetical, but all participants agreed that it was also realistic and could occur in our environments.

Participants with an ICT background and governance background (with focus on business continuity) were divided into three mixed inter-agency groups. Many overall similarities in the approach of the agencies were observed, with some differences caused by different setups/organisational background and environment (different size, cybersecurity capabilities (e.g. standby service), available resources and division of roles and responsibilities, experience with cyber threats, etc).

After the exercise, participants discussed their suggested incident responses, and they underlined the importance of some practical elements that should be in place to make an agency's response to an incident smoother and easier.

#### **6.4.3. Exchange on cybersecurity at executive level**

Following the organisation of the two exercises, cybersecurity was also addressed at the executive level, during the Heads of Agencies meeting on 21 November, where Executive Directors and senior representatives from JHA Agencies exchanged on this topic. They called for more coordination and cooperation in the field of cybersecurity and some agencies proposed to explore an option of shared resources and services in the future. Agencies also



highlighted the need to build internal capacity, for example by training and raising awareness among staff and by organising simulations in the agencies and among the agencies.

## 6.5. JHAAN Communication and promotion

The JHAAN assessment report 2021 highlighted, inter alia, the importance of both internal and external communication on the network's functioning and activities and the need for improvements. The EUAA followed up on this recommendation and suggested communication and promotion of the network as one of the priorities in 2023. Various activities were organised aiming to increase cooperation among the agencies at working level, increase knowledge among the agencies' own staff about the other agencies and about the network, increase awareness about the network among its main EU institutional stakeholders, and increase outreach to the general public.

### 6.5.1. Staff Exchange Programme

The EUAA organised the first ever Staff Exchange Programme for the JHAAN. Six agencies participated in the programme (CEPOL, EIGE, EUAA, eu-LISA, FRA and Frontex) who together submitted 59 offers to host colleagues from other JHA Agencies and 90 offers to send staff to those positions. The majority of the 59 final matches, which resulted in actual exchanges, were related to core business functions, i.e. mandate-related activities.

Although initial impressions about the programme are positive, the network concluded that the initiative should be evaluated properly before setting up a second edition.

### 6.5.2. Meeting on Reporting Methodologies, 5 July 2023

Following up on two successful meetings in 2020 and 2021 on methodologies for the production of annual reports by JHA Agencies, the EUAA organised a dialogue with colleagues from other JHA Agencies on 5 July 2023 in Brussels. Colleagues from the European Parliamentary Research Service as well as colleagues from the Commission's Migration, Borders and Security Unit (E2) joined the meeting which focused on main insights, lessons learnt and exchange of good practices from the production of the latest edition of the respective annual reports.

Common lessons learnt and good practices, shared by participants, touched upon both the production process and the outputs themselves. Examples included early collection of information to allow more time for drafting; operating on the basis of clear expectations and timelines for all colleagues involved in the production of outputs, and increasing accessibility by breaking down information into different, targeted outputs. There was also a focus on visualisations and infographics. The production of web versions, which offer the possibility for dynamic content and visualisations were seen by participants as an investment worth making. Maintaining a document/pdf version was also considered of value, especially for cataloguing and research purposes; adding a much-needed emphasis on the effective promotion of outputs (not just on the production) and securing the necessary budget for the production of outputs (including translation-related costs and cooperation with the Publications Office).



To continue this series of constructive dialogues, several themes of common interest emerged during the meeting e.g. design of html/online versions of outputs; issues related to translation; training opportunities and/or effective promotion. The EUAA considers organising another series of meetings in 2024.

### **6.5.3. Open Market Event, 22 September 2023**

On 22 September, the EUAA organised an online open market event for all JHA Agencies staff and colleagues from the EU institutions. Over 300 colleagues joined the online session to learn about the activities of the various agencies and their mutual cooperation.

In an opening video, the different Heads of the Agencies addressed the audience, followed by the premiere of the new promotional video of the network. Subsequently, in four rounds, agencies presented themselves in individual ‘market stalls’ (i.e., break out rooms) which could be freely visited by the different participants. After the session, the EUAA received extremely positive feedback on this event from colleagues across all agencies.

### **6.5.4. Exchange on Single Programming Documents (SPD) good practices, 24 November 2023**

On November 24, the EUAA organised an online meeting with planning counterparts from six JHA Agencies namely CEPOL, EMCDDA, eu-LISA, Eurojust, Europol and Frontex to take stock of and share the feedback and good practices related to the drafting of programming documents. As part of meeting preparations, the EUAA organised bilateral meetings with JHA Agencies between May and July 2023. The meeting inter alia provided an opportunity to discuss in more detail the aspects of corporate planning that required clarification.

During the meeting, the EUAA presented general feedback from the bilateral meetings, including the challenges involved in drafting SPDs. An overview of challenges specific to key performance indicators and on possible approaches to capturing the agencies’ expected impact and planned outcomes was provided. A presentation by CEPOL informed participants of recent efforts to better link performance and the implementation of EU policies. eu-LISA colleagues presented the agency’s portfolio approach to planning and Eurojust informed on its activity-based approach.

Participants welcomed this opportunity to share insights and good practices. Several agencies’ representatives suggested continuing this exchange and thus, the EUAA agreed to launch a short survey on preferred future meeting format and possible topics to be covered.

### **6.5.5. JHAAN Brussels Briefing, 5 December 2023**

On 5 December, the EUAA hosted the Heads of Agencies, JHA coordinators and counsellors from the Member States and high-level stakeholders from the EU institutions for an evening event to promote the various forms of cooperation within the JHAAN and between individual agencies.

Over 60 participants joined the event which started with a screening of the new promotional video of the network and short presentations by the agencies in the current JHAAN





Presidency Trio, followed by remarks by the other agencies, discussing the various ways they work together.

#### **6.5.6. JHAAN promotional products: video, brochure and newsletter**

In addition to the above activities, the EUAA initiated the production of new or updated promotional material of the network in close cooperation with JHA Agencies. Namely, the network launched the in-house production of the new promotional [video](#) of the network, an updated [brochure](#) on JHA Agencies and a [JHAAN Newsletter](#) with highlights of 2023 cooperation.







## 7. Other activities

### 7.1. Annual exchange of JHA Agencies on the charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

On 13 December 2023, FRA organised the annual exchange of JHA Agencies to discuss the promotion of the rights outlined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the 'Charter') both internally and externally. The session, moderated by FRA, included 32 participants from EUAA, FRA, Frontex, CEPOL, ECDC, eu-LISA, Eurojust and Eurofound, along with observers from the EU Commission DG Justice. During the session they shared examples and good practices of how agencies promote the Charter, emphasising internal efforts such as diversity and inclusion promotion and external endeavours to ensure compliance with fundamental rights in operational work, such as during training, exercising the right to access to documents and by providing recommendations to Member States.

This marked the fourth exchange since the Heads of the JHA Agencies signed a joint statement on the implementation of the Charter in November 2019. However, it was the first time that the exchange was held as a dedicated (closed) side event of the pilot event 'CharterXchange'. This unique forum, jointly run by FRA and the European Commission, provides legal practitioners and stakeholders with a platform to explore current and potential applications of the Charter, aiming to drive positive changes for people's rights. The event was attended by more than 700 participants, including more than 350 legal practitioners and civil servants from EU Member States.

Looking ahead, another online exchange among the JHA Agencies, along with other EU agencies focusing on fundamental rights, is planned in 2024. This exchange is scheduled to occur within the framework of the now-annual 'CharterXchange' event, set for December 2024.





## 8. Network products

### 8.1. Joint paper on the Agencies' contributions to the EU's solidarity with Ukraine

In March 2023, the JHAAN published an updated [Joint paper on the Agencies' contributions to the EU's solidarity with Ukraine](#). This paper provides a comprehensive overview and summary of JHA Agencies' actions aiming at supporting the EU, the Member States and EU partners such as third countries and international organisations in view of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine and it covers the period February 2022-February 2023.

The paper highlights a broad spectrum of activities undertaken by the nine JHA Agencies:

- Producing targeted analytical products and reports.
- Identifying key fundamental rights challenges and ways to overcome them.
- Providing operational support to investigations of core international crimes allegedly committed in Ukraine.
- Providing operational support to national authorities, with a particular emphasis on Member States bordering Ukraine and Moldova.
- Information provision-related activities and support.
- Contributing to the enforcement of EU sanctions, and
- Supporting the authorities of Ukraine and Moldova.

The network members agreed to issue an updated paper again in Q1 2024.





## 9. Highlights of inter-agency cooperation in 2023

### 9.1. Close cooperation in drugs-related training between CEPOL and EMCDDA, including shared use of on-line resources

CEPOL and EMCDDA have been collaborating on training and capacity-building activities since 2008. Together, they have been delivering joint training courses on topics such as drug markets and drug-related crime (ISO-certified) and the EU Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances and have released joint webinars on various drug markets. Moreover, CEPOL has contributed with its knowledge and network to the EMCDDA's work on developing drug supply indicators. Since 2023, CEPOL is also providing the EMCDDA with access to a dedicated space on its e-learning platform to manage their own training and learning activities for law enforcement. Further, EMCDDA contributes to the CEPOL Operational Training Needs Assessment (OTNA) by delivering experts to evaluate and update the OTNA on various crime-related topics.

### 9.2. Europol-Eurojust cooperation in the area of core international crimes

Europol and Eurojust provide complementary support to Member States' investigations and prosecutions into war crimes, crimes against humanity and other international crimes. Since the amended Eurojust Regulation entered into force on 1 June 2022, joint cooperation in the area of war crimes has become a priority. Europol has recently joined [the Joint Investigation Team](#) set up at Eurojust at the onset of the war in Ukraine. Both agencies engaged in a process to support the development of Eurojust's capabilities in the field of core international crimes, in particular the establishment of [Eurojust's Core International Crimes Evidence Database](#) (CICED). In order to ensure interoperability and operational deconfliction, Europol and Eurojust agreed to work together towards establishing a Joint Operational Platform on core international crimes. Work on the implementation of this proposal is ongoing.

### 9.3. EUAA-FRA joint publications for guardians of unaccompanied children

EUAA and FRA have collaboratively released a series of booklets aimed at enhancing the understanding of guardians and legal representatives assisting unaccompanied children seeking protection within the EU. The booklets concentrate on the temporary protection of children displaced from Ukraine, international protection, and the asylum procedure. A fourth booklet, covering transnational procedures, is scheduled for publication in early 2024.





## 9.4. Frontex, Europol and Eurojust involvement in EMPACT Operational Actions Plans

Under EMPACT, in 2023 Frontex has engaged very closely with Europol across 11 Operational Action Plans (OAP) relevant to border control. For example, there are 11 Operational Actions embedded in the Migrant Smuggling EMPACT OAP 2023 which are led and co-led by Frontex and Europol jointly, illustrating the nature of this close cooperation. Frontex coordinated 7 Joint Action Days (JAD) in 2023.

Frontex, in cooperation with Europol, continues to support counter-terrorism efforts at the external borders through the implementation of the common risk indicators, (CRI) within Frontex coordinated activities by its Standing Corps and through the respective MS and SAC authorities, including dedicated CT Workshops for EU MSs and selected non-EU border authorities.

Frontex joined efforts with Europol in the trafficking in human beings (THB) priority in several operational actions which brought significant results. The new JAD Global Chain, implemented together with Austria, INTERPOL and 44 countries across the world, was the largest ever global action targeting human trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced begging, and forced criminality. Specific actions targeted the disruption of criminal networks potentially exploiting victims in South America, Asia, Africa, the Western Balkans and Ukraine.

Eurojust participated on-call in the JADs on the THB priority together with Europol and Frontex. Eurojust designated Contact Points reachable during the whole duration of the action days to facilitate the urgent handling of information. The Contact Point at Eurojust was on stand-by to channel via Eurojust's National Desks any request for judicial cooperation arising during the JAD.

## 9.5. FRA-EIGE joint implementation of the Violence against Women Survey II

Both agencies, in close cooperation with the European Commission and Eurostat, further cooperated on collecting data on Violence against Women (the VAW II survey). The project replicates the EU-Gender Based Violence against women survey in eight Member States, ensuring the coherence and synergy of research and availability of EU-wide comparable data on violence against women. The VAW II survey will provide further evidence on the extent and characteristics of violence against women, which will support new policies to prevent and combat gender-based violence. First results data from the survey are expected to be available by the end of 2024.





## 9.6. eu-LISA cooperation with Frontex, Eurojust and Europol on enhanced Schengen Information System (SIS)

In March 2023, significant upgrades entered into force in the Schengen Information System (SIS). The SIS Recast introduced a number of new functionalities, such as the creation of a new type of alerts about children at risk of abduction and vulnerable persons considered to be at risk. Moreover, the return decisions, associated with non-EU nationals identified as no longer having the right to be in the Schengen Area were added to SIS. It will pave the way for mutual recognition of return decisions between Member States. Additionally, SIS will include new types of biometrics and additional tools to combat crime and terrorism. eu-LISA worked closely with Frontex, Eurojust, and Europol to upgrade their access rights. Europol now has access to all alert categories in SIS and is in a position to exchange information with Member States on alerts concerning terrorist offences. Eurojust's National Desks and Frontex operational teams can now access data in SIS.

## 9.7. Continued JHA Agencies cooperation within the EU Innovation Hub for internal security hosted by Europol

The Innovation Hub is a collaborative network of innovation labs and a cross-sectorial EU platform aimed at ensuring coordination and collaboration between all actors of the wider field of internal security. The work of the [EU Innovation Hub for internal security](#) is delivered by the Hub Team, which serves as the operational arm of the Hub. The Hub Team is composed of a number of JHA Agencies, as well as the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council, including the Office of the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator.

Collaboration with JHA Agencies under the aegis of the EU Innovation Hub for internal security will continue and become even closer in 2024, with the creation of thematic clusters focusing on foresight, biometrics, artificial intelligence and encryption. These clusters will be led by different JHA Agencies.

## 9.8. eu-LISA Data Centre hosting services for Frontex and EUAA

eu-LISA has provided Data Centre hosting services at its operational site in Strasbourg, France, for Frontex and EUAA since 2014, including all supporting services.

On the basis of both Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with partner agencies, eu-LISA's Infrastructure Management Unit provided support at numerous occasions for Frontex and the EUAA during 2023.





The services ranged from hands-on support for major equipment upgrades in the Data Centre, handling shipments, logistics and site access, to technical consulting and monitoring work regarding the changes of the Network Service Providers of both agencies.

In addition, the uninterrupted supply needed for the operation of Frontex' and EUAA's Disaster Recovery Sites was ensured by eu-LISA throughout the whole year 24/7.

## 9.9. EUAA-EMCDDA joint analysis of substance use by applicants in reception contexts in EU+ countries

Better access to drug-related services for asylum seekers, and empowering reception centre workers through training in drug use response, are among the priorities highlighted in a report published in October 2023 by the EMCDDA and the EUAA. The needs-assessment study is available in a publication entitled [Professionals working in reception centres in Europe: an overview of drug-related challenges and support needs](#). It inter-alia provides the basis for further collaboration between the EUAA and EMCDDA, for example in the development of training material.

The two agencies joined forces in 2021 to identify the needs and challenges faced by national reception authorities in EU+ countries. The focus was on working with applicants for international protection (IP) who experience substance use-related problems. The study, which is the first European analysis to explore the issue, aims to inform future activities to help implement related responses in reception settings.

The joint effort sought to identify drug consumption patterns among applicants (as perceived by reception professionals), assess staff knowledge on drugs, and clarify needs in order to better manage drug-related problems. It also aimed to examine barriers to implementing drug-related responses in the asylum and reception contexts.

## 9.10. CEPOL, FRA and Frontex contributions to development of the EUAA's Let's speak asylum project

In 2023, the EUAA launched the Let's speak asylum (LSA) information portal, which hosts, in one place, all deliverables of the LSA umbrella project. This portal serves as a reference point for information providers and professionals designing communication and information provision activities in the field of asylum and reception. It covers four thematic areas: asylum procedure, Dublin procedure, reception procedure and resettlement procedure.

The development of the portal was supported by FRA, CEPOL and Frontex as member of the Reference Group. They had also previously contributed to the development of the EUAA toolbox on information provision in the context of access to the asylum procedure, which is one of the components of the portal. The EUAA will continue to develop and upload further







content and material onto the LSA portal during the second phase of the LSA project and further cooperation with JHA Agencies in this regard is foreseen on specific topics.

## 9.11. FRA and the Fundamental Rights Officers from EUAA, Europol and Frontex begin regular exchanges

FRA and the Fundamental Rights Officers (FROs) from EUAA, Europol, and Frontex have initiated regular exchanges. The inaugural joint meeting took place on June 16, 2023, at FRA premises in Vienna. This meeting provided a valuable opportunity for the three FROs and FRA to strengthen ties within the limits of their respective mandates and explore the best ways to learn from each other. It was agreed that FRA and the three FROs will meet regularly to informally exchange information about their work.

In response to a request from the Frontex FRO Office, FRA conducted specific training on how to communicate on migration from a fundamental rights-based perspective for its Media Unit. The training, utilising FRA's eLearning tool 'eMediaToolkit,' jointly developed with newsrooms from across Europe, focused on migration narratives, framing, and communication strategies to avoid disinformation and polarisation.

## 9.12. EIGE and Eurojust join forces for a common project on the European Protection Order

In 2023, EIGE joined Eurojust in preparing a joint project to assess the gaps in the implementation of the European Protection Order (EPO). The EPO is a judicial cooperation instrument, which provides protection to victims when moving or travelling across the EU. The assessment is expected to be released in 2024, if a sufficient number of replies are received to draw meaningful conclusions. This joint work complies with the Victims' Rights Strategy's call for select EU Agencies and entities to report on how to improve the cooperation and exchange of information and good practices between the competent authorities in cross-border cases.





## 10. Priorities for 2024

eu-LISA intends to centre the activities of its presidency around overarching and inclusive topics that are relevant to the entire network. Considering the global trends that mark the decade and building upon the thematic priorities of the Trio Presidency agreed in 2022, eu-LISA will continue with ongoing themes, namely: digitalisation, security and resilience, and implementation of the EU Green Deal. Within these topics, eu-LISA will focus on the aspects that are unique to its tasks and prioritise the streams where it can act as a driver for positive and tangible change.

In order to leverage the unique position of the JHAAN as well as use the momentum expected from the upcoming appointment of new Commissioners for Home Affairs and for Justice, eu-LISA proposes a new priority. This will be to define jointly within the JHAAN, the key areas where initiatives could be put forward, or where additional efforts would be needed during the incoming Commission mandate.

Furthermore, eu-LISA will drive progress on other joint initiatives, such as the joint paper on JHA Agencies' Contribution to EU Solidarity with Ukraine; the annual exchange on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; and other activities agreed by the network. The agency aims to continue with the JHAAN Staff Exchange Programme successfully introduced by the EUAA in 2023. In addition, eu-LISA will continue the network's efforts to enhance communication with its stakeholders about its activities.

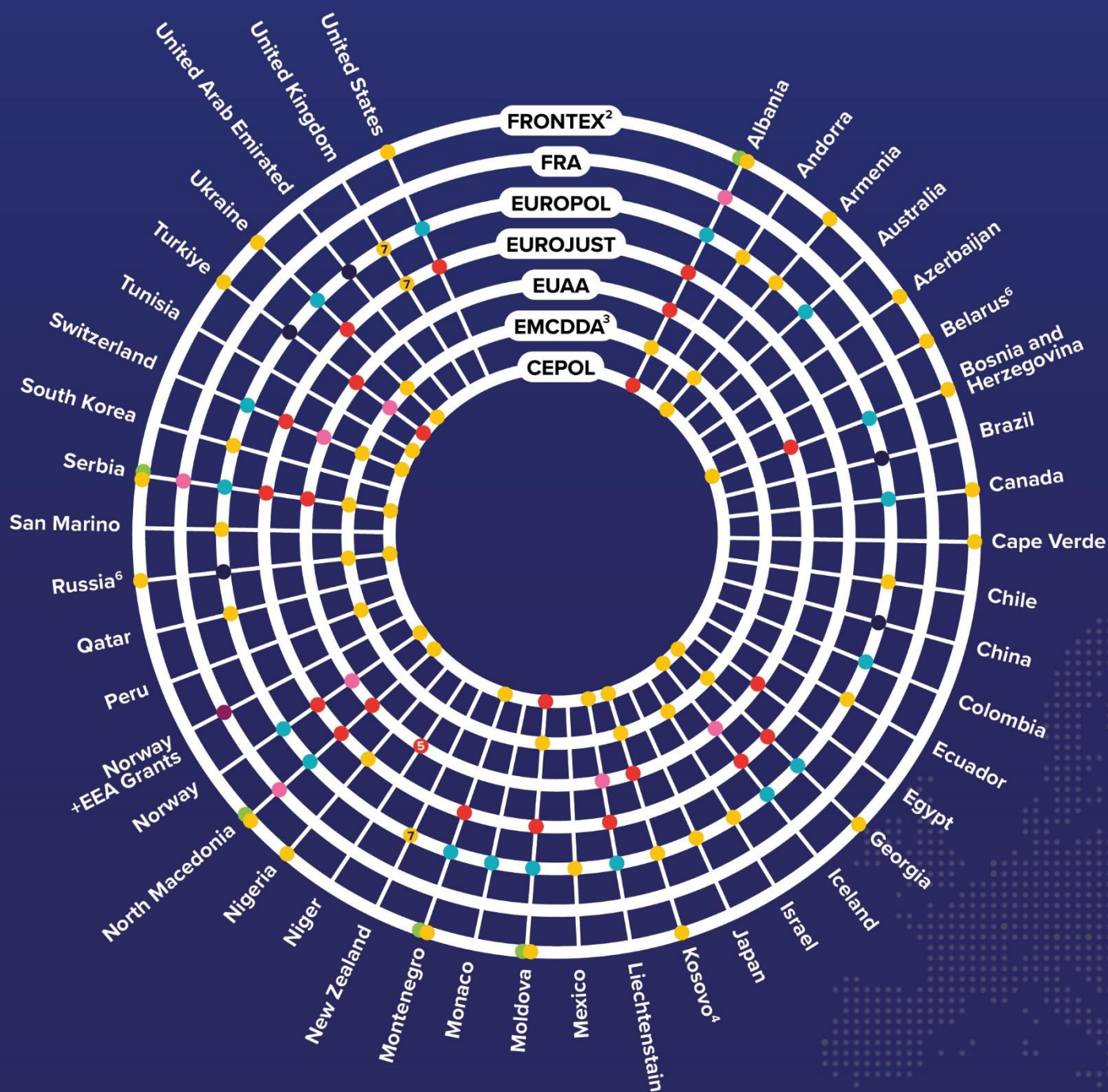
In sum, eu-LISA proposes that during its Presidency of JHAAN the network focus on four priority topics:

1. Digitalisation and innovation in the Justice and Home Affairs area.  
Activities will focus on the potential for using cloud services and AI in the JHA domain, as well as on biometrics and standardisation. Travel facilitation and innovation will also feature.
2. Security, resilience and data protection.  
Relevant themes include the implementation of the tasks deriving from the EU Information Security and Cybersecurity Regulations; business continuity and disaster recovery; joint risk assessments; or data protection aspects of the use of AI.
3. Social responsibility and Green Deal for JHA Agencies.  
Most notably, the promotion of inclusion, diversity, and gender balance in our organisations; use of AI for optimising energy efficiency; and the possibility of green data centres.
4. Identifying key JHA priorities to support the work of incoming Commissioners  
Identifying priorities and initiatives in the JHA field that the new Commissioners could also prioritise during their mandate.



# JUSTICE & HOME AFFAIRS AGENCIES NETWORK

Cooperation instruments with third countries<sup>1</sup>



- Cooperation agreement
- Operational agreement
- Strategic agreement
- Working arrangement
- EU Status Agreement
- Council decision
- Administrative arrangement for cooperation Exchange of letters

(1) This infographic portrays different types of agreements concluded by the agencies with third countries. It does not cover other types of cooperation, such as capacity building projects.

(2) For Frontex, States participating in the Schengen acquis are not considered third countries.

(3) For the EMCDDA, up to 2015, the terminology used for the existing instruments was Memorandum of Understanding.

(4) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

(5) Cooperation on hold due to the coup d'etat of 26 July 2023.

(6) Cooperation has been suspended in line with EU general policy guidelines.

(7) Working and Administrative Arrangement implementing the international agreements concluded by the EU, which allow for exchange of personal data.



## 11.2. EMPACT Infographics

**Table 1. EU COM AND EU AGENCIES INVOLVEMENT IN OAPs 2023**

Priorities in EMPACT 2022-2025			
No.	Name	Abbreviation	OAP No.
1	High risk criminal networks	HRCN	1
2	Cyber attacks	CYBER	2
3	Trafficking in human beings	THB	3
4	Child sexual exploitation	CSE	4
5	Migrant smuggling	MIGR	5
6	Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin	CCH	6.1
7	New Psychoactive Substances and Synthetic drugs	SYD-NPS	6.2
8	Online fraud schemes	OFS	7.1
9	Excise fraud	EXC	7.2
10	MTIC fraud	MTIC	7.3
11	Intellectual Property Crime, Counterfeit Goods and Currencies	IPRCGC	7.4
12	Criminal Finances, Money Laundering and Asset Recovery	CFMLAR	7.5
13	Organised Property Crime	OPC	8





Priorities in EMPACT 2022-2025			
No.	Name	Abbreviation	OAP No.
14	Environmental crime	Envi	9
15	Firearms	FIA	10







Figure 1. EUROPOL

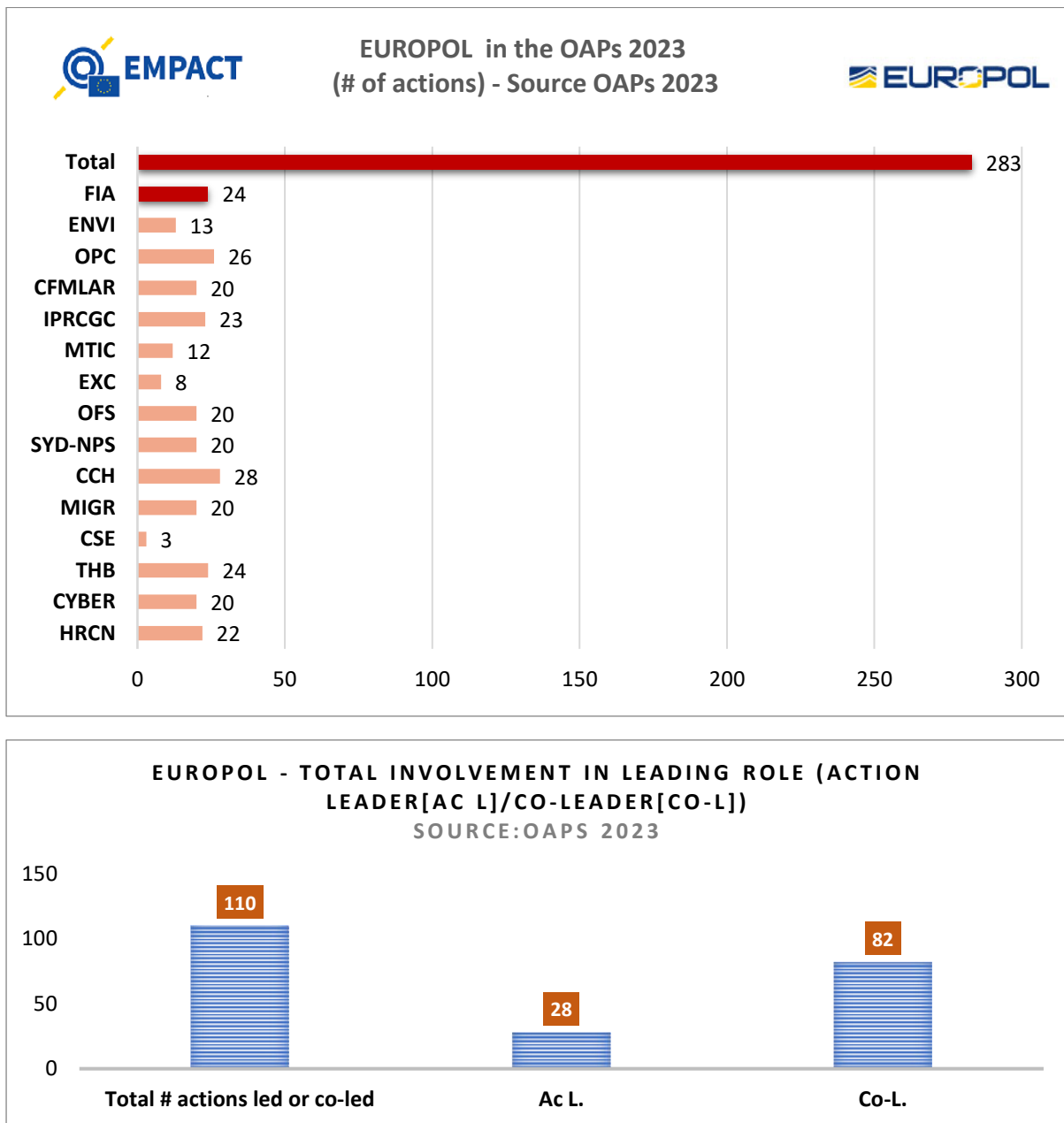




Figure 2. EUROJUST

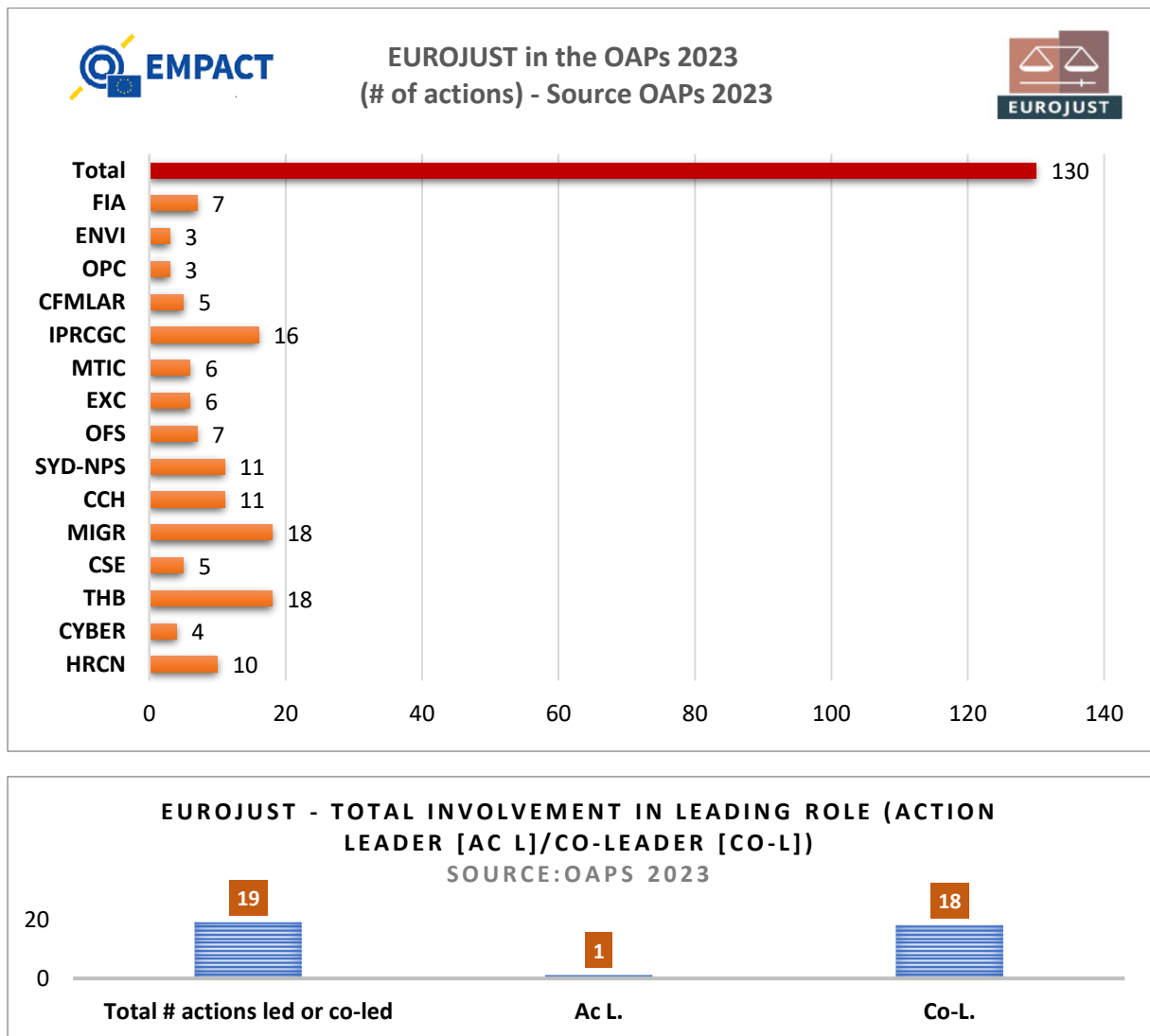




Figure 3. FRONTEX

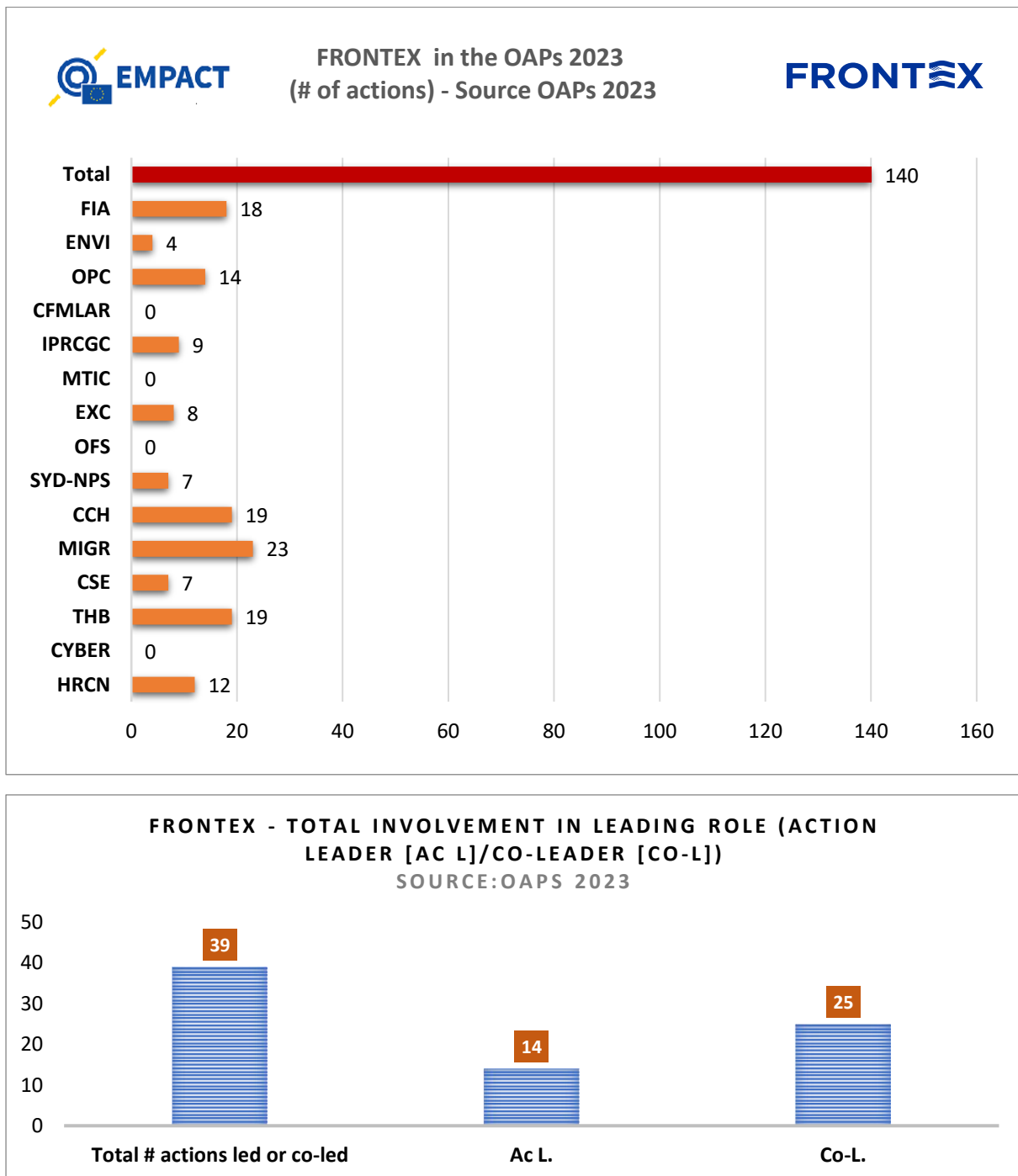




Figure 4. CEPOL

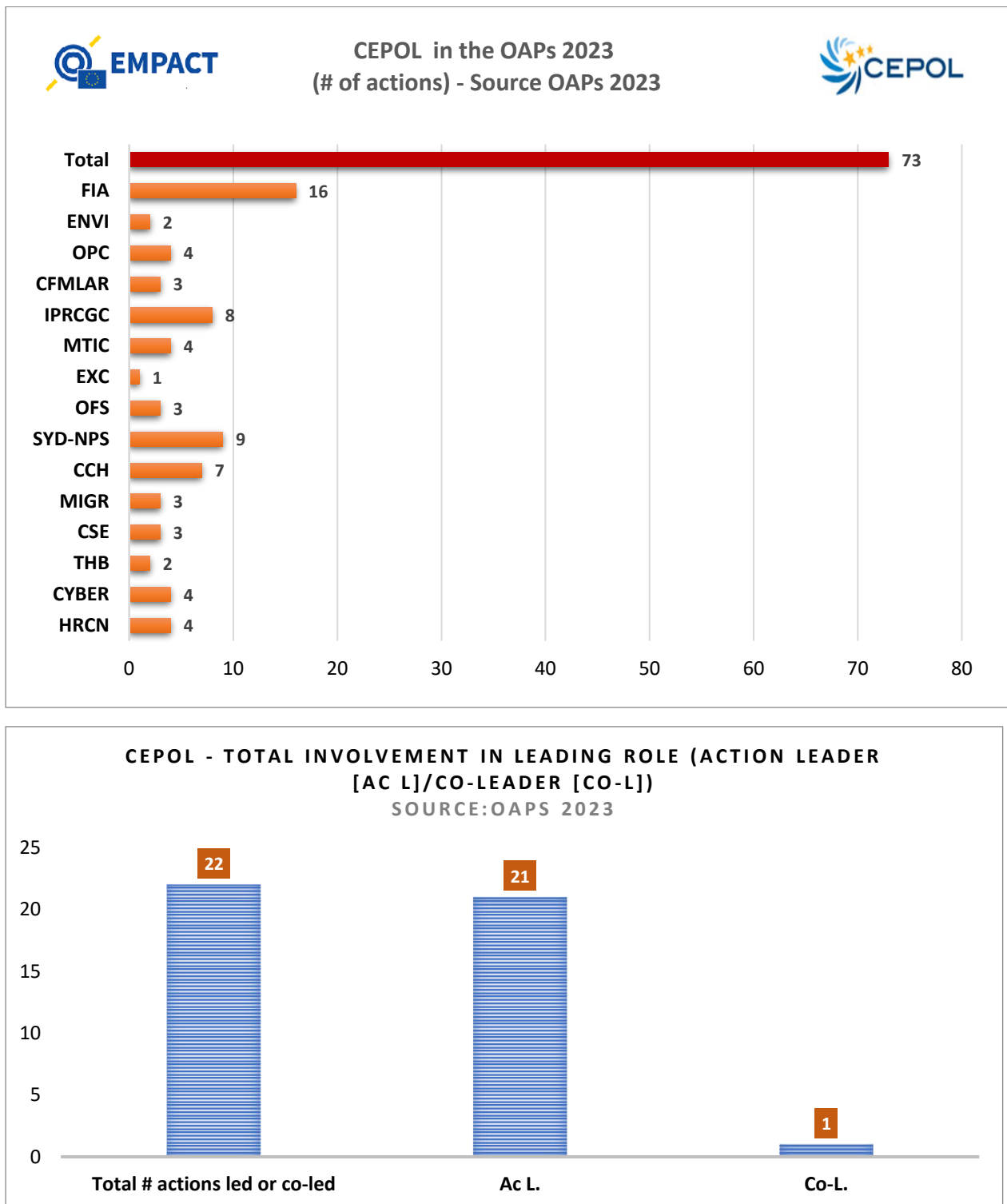




Figure 5. eu-LISA

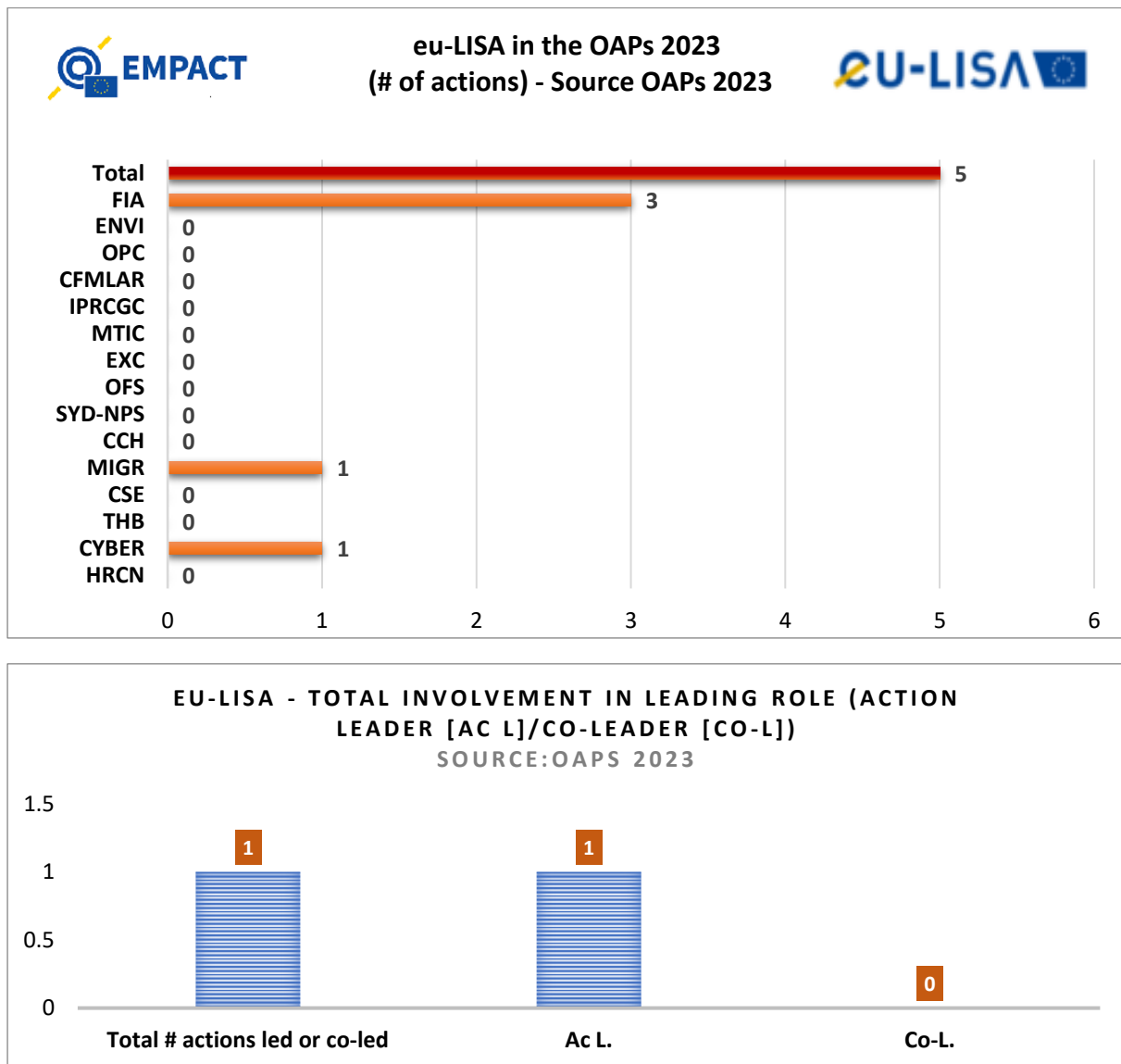






Figure 5. EMCDDA

