Eurojust

In 2002, the Council set up Eurojust in order to reinforce the fight against serious organised crime. In 2018, the European Parliament and the Council updated the mandate of Eurojust to support and strengthen coordination and cooperation between national investigating and prosecuting authorities in relation to serious cross-border crime. Eurojust is a body composed of prosecutors, judges and representatives of judicial authorities with equivalent competences.

What is Eurojust?

Eurojust, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, is a unique hub based in The Hague, the Netherlands, where national judicial authorities work closely together to fight serious cross-border crime. The role of Eurojust is to help make Europe a safer place by coordinating the work of national authorities – from the EU Member States as well as third States – in investigating and prosecuting of transnational crime.

What are the tasks and competences of Eurojust?

Eurojust supports and strengthens coordination and cooperation between national investigating and prosecuting authorities in relation to serious crime which Eurojust is competent to deal with, where that crime affects two or more Member States, or requires prosecution on common bases, on the basis of operations conducted and information supplied by the Member States' authorities, by Europol, by the EPPO and by OLAF.

To carry out its tasks, Eurojust takes into account any request emanating from a competent authority of a Member State, any information provided by Union authorities, institutions, bodies, offices and agencies competent, as well as any information collected by Eurojust itself.

Eurojust also facilitates the execution of requests for, and decisions on, judicial cooperation, including requests and decisions based on instruments that give effect to the principle of mutual recognition.

Eurojust is competent with respect to the forms of serious crime listed in Eurojust Regulation. However, as of the date on which the EPPO assumes its investigative and prosecutorial tasks, Eurojust shall not exercise its competence with regard to crimes for which the EPPO exercises its competence, except in those cases where Member States which do not participate in enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the EPPO are also involved and at the request of those Member States or at the request of the EPPO.

Eurojust shall exercise its competence for crimes affecting the financial interests of the Union in cases involving Member States which participate in enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the EPPO but in respect of which the EPPO does not have competence or decides not to exercise its competence.

How does Eurojust function?

Eurojust assists in a vast range of investigations and prosecutions. Each case is different and requires an individual approach. Often, investigators and prosecutors must act immediately to locate and apprehend suspects. In such cases, national authorities can rely on Eurojust's unique on-call services, for example by facilitating the swift execution of a European Arrest Warrant (EAW), a freezing order or the collection of evidence using a European Investigation Order (EIO). Other times, an investigation is built slowly and methodically, entailing months, or even years, of careful planning, coordination and discussion, with Eurojust playing a coordinating role. Four key types of support provided by Eurojust are joint investigation teams, EU judicial cooperation tools, coordination meetings and coordination centres.

The cases brought before Eurojust either involve two or more EU Member States or a Member State and a non-EU State. Sometimes cases involve crimes committed in a single Member State that have repercussions beyond its borders. Eurojust offers Member States its vast experience and expertise in judicial cooperation, including a range of tools to handle problems such as conflicts of jurisdiction, extradition, admissibility of evidence, and the freezing and recovery of assets. As Eurojust accommodates authorities from all Member States and various third States, it can respond to requests rapidly, sometimes helping to resolve a case within hours.

What is the organization of Eurojust?

Eurojust College is composed of National Members, one from each of the EU Member State (with the exception of Denmark, which by virtue of Protocol No 22 is not bound by the Eurojust Regulation. The National Members are judges, prosecutors or other judicial professionals of equivalent competence. National Members are supported by Deputies and Assistants.

When exercising its management functions, the College also comprises a representative of the European Commission. The College is overseen by Eurojust's President, who is elected for a term of office of four years, with a term limit of two terms. Two Vice-Presidents assist the President in exercising his/her functions. They are also elected for a term of office of four years, with a term limit of two terms.

Eurojust's Executive Board assists the Eurojust College in its management functions. It oversees the necessary preparatory work of the Administrative Director on administrative matters for adoption by the College, and it takes administrative decisions that are explicitly described in Article 16 of the Eurojust Regulation.

The Executive Board is chaired by the President of Eurojust and comprises the Vice-Presidents of Eurojust as well as a representative of the European Commission. Two other members of the College are appointed to the Board under a two-year rotation system.

The Administrative Director manages the administration of Eurojust, which in turn supports the Eurojust College.

Related Links

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