

German & French Justice Ministers express support for Eurojust

The Hague, 30 September 2019

Ms Christine Lambrecht, the newly appointed German Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection, as well as Ms Nicole Belloubet, French Minister of Justice since 2017, visited Eurojust today to reaffirm their full support for Eurojust and its ongoing fight against cross-border organised crime. Mr Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust, Mr Klaus Meyer-Cabri, Vice-President of Eurojust and National Member for Germany at Eurojust and Mr Baudoin Thouvenot, National Member from France at Eurojust since 2 September 2019, discussed with the Ministers how they can optimise trans-European judicial cooperation at bilateral and EU level to bring more criminals and their networks to justice.

Ms Christine Lambrecht said after the meeting: *'Eurojust is a valued and successful partner of the EU Member States' judicial authorities and has long been an integral part of the European area of freedom, security and justice. Today, crime is often cross-border and, therefore, prosecutors and courts must increasingly act at cross-border level if criminal proceedings are to succeed. Eurojust supports judicial authorities effectively and with great commitment. I am pleased that the German Desk at Eurojust has a significant contribution to this and that it assumes organisational responsibility for Eurojust through its German Vice-President. I wish Eurojust continued success in its important work. However, to achieve this, Eurojust needs adequate funding and resources.'*

Ms Nicole Belloubet stated: *'During the very fruitful meeting I have had with Eurojust President Mr Ladislav Hamran, we were able to discuss the French initiative to create a Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register, which has been given support by the seven EU Member States that belong to the Vendôme Group. I have no doubt that this register, which has just started, will be a very efficient tool for judicial authorities in combating terrorism. On this occasion, I have expressed again to the President my support for Eurojust, which is an indispensable tool for judicial cooperation between Member States in criminal matters.'*

Mr Ladislav Hamran said: *'We warmly welcome the French and German Ministers of Justice at Eurojust. Their presence here demonstrates the strong commitment of their countries to our common goal and the political will to intensify and expand our collaboration. Only together can we improve security for our fellow European citizens and guarantee that European values, such as respect for human life and dignity, are widely upheld.'*

The discussions centred on the key role of Germany and France in successfully combatting serious crime in Europe, *inter alia* drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, terrorism, cybercrime and various types of fraud. The officials explored avenues for expanding multinational

cooperation and making best use of Eurojust's legal expertise and judicial tools, e.g. [joint investigation teams](#), [coordination meetings](#) and [coordination centres](#), to advance national investigations and prosecutions of international crime.

This was the first official mission of the German Minister abroad, since her appointment, in the context of her participation in the Vendome Group meeting, currently hosted by Mr Ferdinand Grapperhaus, Dutch Minister of Justice and Security. As Ms Lambrecht bears ultimate responsibility for the German Desk at Eurojust, which is subject to the jurisdiction of the German Ministry of Justice, she stressed the importance of continuing and strengthening the successful cooperation with Eurojust.

Ms Belloubet also reiterated the need to enhance bilateral and multilateral efforts within Eurojust to target trans-border crime more efficiently. The French Minister also pinpointed the significance of the recently created [Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register](#) at Eurojust to reinforce judicial coordination against terrorist threats, by providing 24/7 support to national judicial authorities.



Photo © Eurojust. From left to right: Mr Meyer-Cabri, Ms Lambrecht, Mr Hamran, Ms Belloubet, Mr Thouvenot

[Press release – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Maroš Šefčovič](#)

Political groups' coordinators from the committees will meet within 24 hours to assess the performance of Commissioner-designate Šefčovič.

Closing the gap between EU citizens and EU institutions

During his introductory speech, Mr Šefčovič said that the “natural partnership between the Parliament and the Commission” needs to evolve into “world-class anticipatory governance”. He also reiterated that the Commission will present legislative proposals based on EP resolutions and committed to resume negotiations on Parliament's right of inquiry.

MEPs put forward several questions on proposals to enhance information-sharing through EU research resources and shared databases, as well as on citizens' and national parliaments' role in defining future EU legislation. Members also questioned the Vice President-designate on the “one in, one out” principle, which aims to reduce red tape, and received assurance that the EP will have a leading role in the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe.

The candidate mentioned the need to modernise the REFIT platform – an expert group whose goal is to simplify laws and reduce burdens – and the need to follow e-government best practice while addressing concerns on the emergence of Artificial Intelligence.

You can watch the video recording of the [full hearing here](#).

Press point

At the end of the hearing, Committee Chairs Tajani and Nethsingha with VP-designate Šefčovič held a press point outside the meeting room: [watch it here](#).

Next steps

Based on the committees' recommendations, the Conference of Presidents will decide on 17 October if Parliament has received sufficient information to declare the hearing process closed. If so, the plenary will vote on whether or not to elect the Commission as a whole on 23 October, in Strasbourg.

Background

The joint hearing with Constitutional Affairs and Legal Affairs MEPs was co-chaired by Antonio Tajani and Lucy Nethsingha. Members from the associated Committees (Industry, Research and Energy, and Petitions) also participated in the hearing.

[Press release – Letters by President Sassoli to Commission President-elect von der Leyen](#)

European Parliament President David Sassoli has sent two letters to the President-elect of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen today to inform her that the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee has voted to declare Commissioners-designate László Trócsányi and Rovana Plumb unable to exercise their functions, on the grounds of conflicts of interest found when their declarations of financial interests were examined.

Until President-elect von der Leyen has communicated to the Parliament what further steps she intends to take, the hearings for the Romanian and Hungarian Commissioners-designate will be suspended.

Article – Tuesday's commissioner hearings: Schmit, Urpilainen, Wojciechowski, Johansson and Kyriakides

Nicolas Schmit



Jutta Urpilainen



Janusz Wojciechowski



Ylva Johansson



Stella Kyriakides



Nicolas Schmit (Luxembourg), Jutta Urpilainen (Finland), Janusz Wojciechowski

(Poland), Ylva Johansson (Sweden) and Stella Kyriakides (Cyprus) will take part in hearings at the Parliament on 1 October.

Before the European Parliament can vote the new European Commission led by [Ursula von der Leyen](#) into office, parliamentary committees will assess the suitability of all commissioners-designate.

Each candidate commissioner will attend a live-streamed, [three-hour hearing](#) in front of the committee or committees responsible for their proposed portfolio. The hearings take place between Monday 30 September and Tuesday 8 October.

[Learn more about the hearings process.](#)

EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information (COI) report on Eritrea

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) report on Eritrea. The report provides updated information on selected topics (national service, exit from Eritrea, and treatment of returnees), relevant for international protection status determination. Between August 2018 and July 2019, more than 14 475 Eritrean applications were registered in the EU+ countries.¹

This EASO COI report on Eritrea was drafted by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Division Analysis. The report updates and expands on the EASO COI report on national service and illegal exit (in Eritrea) from 2016. It provides a brief overview of Eritrea's latest political developments, in the period 2016-2019, including the *rapprochement* with Ethiopia, the legal framework in force, and the relevant human rights issues. For the same reference period, the report then focuses on three main topics: (1) structure and functioning of the national service; (2) legal and illegal exit from the country; (3) voluntary and forced return. Transversally to the above mentioned subjects, the report details forms of punishment and treatment of deserters, draft evaders, persons illegally exiting the country, and returnees. Besides relevant public and governmental sources, the report relies extensively on interviews with key informants and experts, which were mostly carried out in the period May-July 2019.

The report was peer reviewed by EASO and other COI researchers from the following national asylum authorities: Germany, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Country Analysis; and Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Section for Information Analysis. The report was drafted and reviewed in accordance with EASO's COI Report Methodology.

The report can be [downloaded](#) from the EASO COI portal.

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[1] EASO EPS Data from EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland, data from Malta are missing.