

Statement by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on the passing away of former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok

It was with deep sadness that I learnt of the passing of Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands and my close friend.

Wim Kok was an extraordinarily skilful statesman. Throughout his long political career he achieved important social reforms and was a devoted European who fought for equality and civil rights in a way I truly admire. As Prime Ministers, we worked together on the launch of our single currency, the euro, and for a more social Europe.

My thoughts are with his wife Rita, his children, his grandchildren and all those who were close to him. He will be greatly missed.

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The Hague, 19 October 2018

Top prosecutors from across Europe gathered today at Eurojust in The Hague to tackle the ever-changing challenges of cross-border terrorism and migrant smuggling, share new strategies in using the [European Investigation Order](#), discuss developments in the area of e-evidence and prepare for the new Eurojust Regulation. The 13th meeting of the [Consultative Forum](#) of Prosecutors General and Directors of Public Prosecutions of the Member States of the European Union (the Consultative Forum) works towards making the cooperation between judges, investigators and prosecutors in the European Union simpler, quicker and stronger.

This year's meeting was co-hosted by Ms Asya Petrova, Deputy Prosecutor General of Bulgaria, and Ms Barbara Göth-Flemmich, Head of the International Criminal Law Department of Austria, in the context of the Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies of the Council of the European Union. Consultative Forum members stressed the importance of comparing problems and solutions, and sharing admissible evidence, including e-evidence, to help practitioners involved in international criminal investigations deliver more and better results in less time. They also pointed out the need to promote the work of Eurojust as the EU's judicial information hub and to use judicial cooperation tools, such as the European Investigation Order (EIO), more often and more efficiently.

Ms Petrova said: *The channels used by migrants and asylum seekers to pass through Bulgaria are often also used by terrorists and human traffickers. This situation creates a major challenge for our country and requires a higher level of scrutiny and a coordinated approach at European level to identify the threats against, and be able to ensure, peace and security on the continent.*

Ms Göth-Flemmich said: *Crime does not stop at national borders. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to strengthen the cooperation between the prosecution services in the European Union and beyond. The Consultative Forum provides a key platform to discuss new developments in our common fight against transnational crime.*

Mr Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust, said: *At Eurojust, we serve the joint vision of justice for all our fellow European citizens. This year, Eurojust had once more the special honour and pleasure to welcome at its premises top prosecutors from all EU countries. The Consultative Forum is a unique opportunity for them to share national best practice and work more closely together towards the common goal of protection, security and justice.*

Counter-terrorism

Among the main topics of the Consultative Forum's meeting were developments in national legislation in the area of counter-terrorism, current challenges and lessons learned from investigations of terrorism cases, as well as the experience gained through judicial cooperation between EU Member States and third States with the support of Eurojust and Europol. Forum members looked into effective mechanisms to both prevent and combat transnational terrorism, such as the enhanced sharing of information. The conclusions of Eurojust's annual meeting on counter-terrorism for 2018 were also presented to the Forum's participants.

Eurojust priority areas

This year's meeting paid special attention to Eurojust's operational activities in key crime areas, such as migrant smuggling, faster and easier access to e-evidence, with Eurojust in a coordinating role, as well as the effective implementation of the European Investigation Order (EIO), allowing for direct exchange and networking between the judicial authorities of different States. To that effect, the members of the Forum took note of the conclusions of this year's Eurojust meeting on migrant smuggling and Eurojust meeting on the EIO. The President of Eurojust also seized the opportunity to share his future vision of digital justice in the European Union, in which operational data is exchanged in an automated, structured and secure manner.

New Eurojust Regulation

Forum members were informed about the EU's new judicial landscape following the reform of Eurojust, and the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). The new Eurojust Regulation is in the final stages of the legislative procedure, awaiting formal adoption by the Council. The new Regulation will provide Eurojust with a new governance set-up and the basis for cooperation with the EPPO, and will be aligned with the EU framework on external relations and data protection. Forum members reflected on the impact of these changes and new opportunities to reinforce judicial

cooperation against serious cross-border organised crime.

Photos © Eurojust

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 Photos © Eurojust

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Eurojust with 'adequate resources to face new challenges posed by technological developments and the evolving security threat landscape'.

Mr Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust, said: '*I warmly welcome this acknowledgement of the European Council, which gives Eurojust a solid basis to secure the resources we need to modernise EU criminal justice. In the coming months, Eurojust will put forward concrete proposals that will allow us to more effectively deal with growing threats and create a safer Europe.*'

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