

Joint press release

Tirana, 5 October 2018

Today, Ms Etilda Gjonaj, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Albania, and Mr Ladislav Hamran, President of Eurojust, the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit, signed a cooperation agreement to enhance operational and strategic judicial cooperation between Albania and Eurojust. It will be the third cooperation agreement between Eurojust and a State in the Western Balkan region and is a further important step in the joint fight against serious transnational crime, since it will unlock the possibility of a safe and efficient exchange of judicial information and sharing of evidence. The signing ceremony took place in the context of this year's [EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs](#) in Tirana, and in the presence of Dr Josef Moser, Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Reforms, Deregulation and Justice of Austria, and Ms Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

Mr Hamran said: *'In our globalised world, criminals cross borders and so must our criminal justice systems. I warmly welcome the conclusion of today's cooperation agreement, which will consolidate our partnership and bring Albania fully into the Eurojust family. It will unlock the full possibilities for Albania to take part in and benefit from all the practical cooperation tools offered through Eurojust to prosecute serious, cross-border crime cases, bring suspects to justice and protect our citizens. Only together can we make Europe a safer place.'*

Dr Moser said: *'On an international level, we can only crack down on crime if we act together in a global effort. Eurojust promotes and facilitates the coordination and cooperation among the national judicial authorities in prosecuting serious cross-border crime in the EU. Yesterday, we saw in the framework of the Western Balkans Conference that Albania is now ready to cooperate more closely with the EU – also in the area of criminal law. The Austrian Presidency greatly welcomes the cooperation between Eurojust and Albania. In this context, we have importantly set the course for better and more intensive cooperation of Albania with the EU.'*

Ms Jourová said: *'I welcome the signature of the Eurojust-Albania cooperation agreement. Closer ties between the Albanian and European judicial authorities will help improve the fight against transnational crime. The aim is simple: we want to make life of organised crime groups more difficult by exchanging information and evidence faster. The agreement will strengthen cooperation and mutual trust between Albania and its EU partners, contributing to Albania's European perspective.'*

Fast and efficient exchange of information and evidence between Albania and EU Member States in international crime investigations

✖ With today's agreement, Albania will benefit from accessing Eurojust's information systems as well as from sharing personal data and evidence with prosecutors and investigators from all over Europe. The agreement creates also the possibility to appoint a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust in the near future to further improve cooperation. Since 2015, Albania has been involved in 36 international investigations into serious cross-border crime, supported by Eurojust, mainly concerning organised crime groups that engage in drug trafficking and crimes against life, limb or personal freedom, such as murder, kidnapping and illegal trade in human organs (*click on image to enlarge*). Since 2017, Albania has also participated in two [joint investigation teams](#) (JITs), including one with Italy. The formal negotiations to enter into a cooperation agreement were initiated in 2016.

✖ A strong hands-on partnership with the Western Balkans

Since 2008, Eurojust has established an increasingly strong framework for structural judicial cooperation between EU Member States and the Western Balkan States in the area of serious crime. Eurojust has cooperation agreements in place with fYROM since 2008 and with Montenegro since 2016. These States also have Liaison Prosecutors appointed at Eurojust in The Hague, who work side by side with magistrates from the EU Member States to facilitate ongoing investigations. There are contact points for Eurojust in five Western Balkan States, including in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (*click on image to enlarge*).

Facilitation of nearly 200 joint criminal investigations between EU Member and Western Balkan States

✖ From January 2015 to September 2018, 193 cases were registered with Eurojust involving Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, fYROM, Montenegro and Serbia. The most common crime types were swindling and fraud, drug trafficking, as well as crimes against life, limb or personal freedom. During the reference period, 9 joint investigation teams (JITs) between EU Member States and Western Balkan States were established (*click on image to enlarge*).

Background: Eurojust cooperation agreements

Eurojust is the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit set up in 2002 to stimulate and enhance the cooperation between the competent authorities of the Member States and improve the coordination of their investigations and prosecutions, in relation to serious organised cross-border crime. Eurojust can formally cooperate with third States with which it has signed cooperation agreements for the exchange of judicial information and personal data. Currently, Eurojust has concluded cooperation agreements with 10 third States: Albania, fYROM, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the USA. Six of these States have also appointed a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust.

More information



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Statement by Commissioner Andriukaitis at the G20 Health Ministerial Meeting, Argentina

SESSION 1

Dear Ministers, Colleagues,

Firstly, I want to wish Argentina well on its G20 Presidency. I also want to thank Professor Rubinstein and Mr. Delgado for leading on sustainable development and for organising today's meeting. Each of the topics you chose – antimicrobial resistance; health systems strengthening; improving our response to health emergencies; and overweight and obesity in children is critically important to our citizens, our societies, our economies.

I think it is worth reiterating the potential impact of Antimicrobial Resistance or AMR – if we do not act decisively and cohesively. By 2050 there could be 10 million deaths worldwide due to AMR. The World Bank has warned that by 2050, AMR could cause global economic damage on a par with the 2008 financial crisis. This is an unacceptable scenario. The establishment of the AMR Research & Development Hub illustrates the value of the G20. But we must maintain political momentum and secure concrete commitments from multiple sectors. This threat cannot be resolved by the health sector alone – any viable solutions must follow a coherent 'one health' approach and recognise the connections between human and animal health and healthy ecosystems. This afternoon's simulation exercise is timely – I believe it will not only illustrate the danger posed by AMR across multiple sectors, but it will also highlight the need to improve our capacity to prevent, detect, prepare and respond to health emergencies. This is particularly true in the most vulnerable countries. Remember, the EU is your ally in improving health security. We established the European Medical Corps after the Ebola crisis – for this very purpose. Like the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, it can provide coordinated support to countries or international organisations in need of assistance. But we must ensure greater coherence between the various response and research mechanisms – especially around preparedness. And I urge this group to put its collective weight behind the WHO International Health Regulations and the WHO Emergency Reform.

Prosperous, sustainable societies depend on high-quality health systems that are resilient, equitable, and accessible. Strong health systems are essential in our fight against AMR and they are fundamental to how we prepare for and respond to health emergencies. We have a responsibility to protect and promote the right of everyone to enjoy the highest standard of physical and mental health. So I want to take this opportunity to reiterate the EU's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to achieving universal

health coverage for all. We will also continue to support partner countries in their efforts to build strong, effective health systems. Indeed, we are currently preparing, with WHO, a programme focusing on access, primary care and universal health coverage for 100 countries worldwide, to a total volume of EUR 175 million.

Ministers, These are global problems that require global solutions by global leaders. And those solutions depend on political will. As the G20, we have a collective responsibility to lead the movement towards sustainability. Let us ensure that we do so in a coordinated, strategic, and determined fashion.

Thank you.

SESSION 2

Dear Ministers, Colleagues,

In the European Union, nearly one in four boys and one in five girls is overweight or obese. One in every three children between the ages of six and nine is overweight or obese. These are alarming statistics and prove that childhood obesity is a major problem in all EU Member States – much as it is across the globe. So I am very grateful to Argentina for its commitment to addressing childhood development, in particular childhood overweight and obesity.

When I addressed the United Nations High level meeting on non-communicable diseases last week, I urged the global community to focus more on promotion and prevention in fighting the global epidemic of NCDs. In the EU, up to 7% of our national health budgets is spent on diseases linked to obesity each year, while only 3% is spent on prevention. And the funds available are dwarfed by the sums spent on the promotion of unhealthy food and drink products. We need to tackle the root causes of this problem – and that means improving the quality and diversity of nutrition. In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we must strive for a future in which all people have access to affordable, safe, diversified and nutritious food. I also want to take this opportunity to stress a point that is fundamental to this discussion – governments and public health authorities cannot solve this crisis alone. We need a genuine health-in-all-policies, multi-stakeholder approach. This includes a strong commitment from food business operators on food reformulation and on reducing the exposure of children to aggressive and digital marketing of foods high in fat, salt and sugars. Unless we include the commercial determinants of health in our plans going forward, then we will fail before we even begin. So I am urging the private sector to show more ambition on this issue. They can be part of the solution – and I know that many industrial players and indeed primary producers feel the same. Of course, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of regular physical activity and creating healthy environments for our children, alongside a healthy diet. This also depends on engagement from other sectors – including transport, town planning, education and culture. And special attention should focus on families in lower socioeconomic situations, who are proportionally more affected by unhealthy lifestyles. Moving forward, the EU is determined to support EU Member States' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals

and the WHO targets on non-communicable diseases. We are also strongly committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and combatting the threat of NCDs through our international cooperation and development policy in partner countries.

Overweight and obesity can lead to hypertension or diabetes, which increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. It is a vicious cycle of cause and consequence that has an immense human, social and economic cost. Early intervention, a health-in-all-policies approach, and a shift to prevention and promotion, can help break this cycle. Our children are our most vulnerable citizens and our most precious resource. We need to do more to help develop healthily, and we need to do it better.

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Ministers, These are global problems that require global solutions by global leaders. And those solutions depend on political will. As the G20, we have a collective responsibility to lead the movement towards sustainability. Let us ensure that we do so in a coordinated, strategic, and determined fashion.

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Thank you.

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar

Press contacts

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As you know, I always try to present the EU's position honestly, and without beating about the bush. Telling the truth, even if difficult and unpleasant,

is the best way of showing respect for partners. That's how it was in Salzburg, and that's also how we will work in the coming days.

First of all, we want to focus on practical and realistic ways of minimising the damage caused by Brexit, on both sides of the channel. Emotional arguments that stress the issue of dignity sound attractive, but they do not facilitate agreement. Let us remember that every actor in this process has their dignity, and confrontation in this field will not lead to anything good.

Second, the task of the EU's negotiators is to defend the interests of the European Union as a whole, and of all the 27 member states. We very much regret that the UK has decided to leave, and we hope for the best relationship in future, but no-one can expect that, because of Brexit, the EU will give up its fundamental values and key interests. Let me make this clear: the EU wants a relationship with the UK that is as close and special as possible. From the very beginning, the EU offer has been not just a Canada deal, but a Canada+++ deal. Much further-reaching on trade, on internal security and on foreign policy cooperation. This is a true measure of respect. And this offer remains in place. The EU is serious about getting the best possible deal. Even though we haven't changed our minds that the consequences of Brexit will be negative, for both sides.

Third, in respecting our partners, we expect the same in return. Comparing the European Union to the Soviet Union is as unwise as it is insulting. The Soviet Union was about prisons and gulags, borders and walls, violence against citizens and neighbours. The European Union is about freedom and human rights, prosperity and peace, life without fear, it is about democracy and pluralism; a continent without internal borders or walls. As the President of the European Council and someone who spent half of my life in the Soviet Bloc, I know what I'm talking about. The Soviet spirit is still alive, as demonstrated by the attack in Salisbury. You will know best where to find this spirit. Rather not in Brussels. And I am sure you will also remember who was the first to declare full solidarity with the UK at that critical moment. Unfortunately, that was not a unique incident. Today, the Dutch and UK governments informed about a cyber attack against the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague, which was carried out by Kremlin intelligence services. On behalf of the EU, I want to fully condemn this attack and express our complete solidarity with those affected. I will put the issue of cyber security on the agenda of the next European Council.

Today, after my long discussion with my guest, the Taoiseach, I want to say that the EU is united behind Ireland and the need to preserve the Northern Ireland peace process. Despite the UK government's rejection of the original EU backstop proposal, we will not give up seeking a workable solution that fully respects the Good Friday Agreement as well as the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union.

Unacceptable remarks that raise the temperature will achieve nothing except wasting more time. What needs to be done is maximum progress by the October European Council. I was party leader myself, for fifteen years, and I know

what the rules of party politics are. But now, once the Tory party conference is over, we should get down to business. Thank you.

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