

Joint international operation against online piracy

The Hague, 10 November 2017

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The joint operations were co-led by units specialised in cybercrime at the offices of the prosecutor generals of Frankfurt am Main and of Dresden, as well as the State Criminal Police of Hesse and Saxony, with the assistance of the German Federal Criminal Police. The operations were carried out in close cooperation with the judicial and law enforcement authorities of France, the Netherlands, Spain, Canada, San Marino and Switzerland.

This international joint operation is the result of the investigations conducted in Germany against criminal networks suspected of managing the internet-based download portals www.usenetrevolution.info, www.town.ag and www.usenet-town.com, which illegally offered licensed or copyrighted materials (such as films, TV shows, software, computer games, music, e-books and e-papers), without paying the required fees to license or copyright owners.

In total, the download portals provided illegal access to approximately 2 million links to licensed or copyrighted materials. The owners of the platforms managed to make an illicit profit of several million euros, and this copyright infringement created damages of approximately EUR 7,5 million.

Through a coordination centre established at its premises in The Hague, Eurojust supported the international joint operations and ensured the transmission and execution of European Investigation Orders, rogatory letters and a European Arrest Warrant, as well as the swift exchange of operational information collected on the ground among all the judicial and law enforcement authorities involved.

For further information about the German investigations, please see the [press release of the prosecutor general of Dresden](#) (in German).

Background:

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The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform is gaining momentum

In March this year, the European Commission (EC) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) launched a joint European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform. The 24 members forming the coordination group of the platform have now been selected and are preparing for their first meeting on 22 November.

The coordination group, which brings together civil society organisations, business and trade union representatives, think tanks and public bodies that have a stake in the circular economy, will guide the Platform's activities for the next three years.

The newly selected team covers a broad spectrum of organisations operating in 13 different EU countries as well as a few with a pan-European reach. They have been selected through an open [call for expressions of interest](#) which attracted no fewer than 192 applications. *"Our transition from a linear towards a more circular economy is one of the key challenges facing Europe. This process must be truly inclusive and we are very happy with the diversity achieved by the selection process "*, said Peter Schmidt Workers' Group member of the EESC's permanent task force on the circular economy.

Stakeholder engagement, however, will be encouraged far beyond the coordination group: *"We have set up a virtual meeting place on our website to serve as an interaction and conversation space for all members of the Circular Economy community. The idea is to strengthen collective knowledge by learning from each other's good practices and sharing lessons learnt. This is essential for the Platform to produce the results we were asked to deliver by the stakeholders in the Member States."*, said Bernd Dittmann Employers' Group member of the EESC's permanent task force on the circular economy.

The platform has been set up to facilitate stakeholder involvement in and accelerate the transition from a linear “take, make and waste” economic model to a circular economy in Europe. Its creation was announced in March at a two-day event hosted jointly by the EC and the EESC, which since then have been busy making it operational. Based on stakeholder input, the platform’s tasks will be to:

- advance the circular economy in Member States, regional and local governments, civil society and businesses;
- strengthen cooperation among stakeholder networks to facilitate the exchange of good practice;
- contribute to identifying the social, economic and cultural barriers to the development of a circular economy in Europe.

“Essentially, we are talking about a networks of networks. We are not planning to re-invent the wheel, rather to bring together existing networks to boost circularity across countries, communities and sectors in Europe. Once a year we have the opportunity to get together in Brussels to establish what is important to the Circular Economy community, streamline synergies and share good practices.” Said Cillian Lohan, Various Interests Group member of the EESC’s permanent task force on the circular economy

The newly formed coordination group is to hold its first meeting in Brussels on 22 November, and the next major conference on the Circular Economy is scheduled for February next year.

The full list of the coordination group members is available [here](#).

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform’s virtual meeting place can be accessed [here](#).

To learn more about the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform please [visit](#).

The fight against climate change cannot be won at the expense of ordinary citizens

The EESC proposes a debate on an EU Bill of Climate Rights to ensure climate justice at all levels

“The fight against climate change can only succeed if all citizens are included. But it is not enough to convince people that we need to change our lifestyles: it is also important to give them the necessary support,” said President Georges Dassis at the start of a side event on “Just transition to

low-carbon economy” organised jointly by the EESC, King’s College London, Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Fondation Jean-Jaurès during the COP23 in Bonn on 8 November. “The transition towards a zero-emission society must be designed in a way that does not aggravate inequalities or create social fractures, but instead helps to balance differences. In calling for a fair transition, the EESC has always refused to play employment off against environmental protection. These two objectives are closely linked and should be pursued with equal determination.”

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) used this event to present its opinion on Climate Justice. The concept of “climate justice” frames global climate change as a political and ethical issue and not just an environmental one. It recognises that the poorest and most vulnerable in society often have to suffer the greatest impact from climate change. Climate justice has been traditionally dealt with as an issue of emerging economies. The EESC wants to apply these principles also to the EU Member States. Therefore the EESC calls for a debate on an EU Bill of Climate Rights that encapsulates the rights of EU citizens and those of nature in the context of the challenges of the global climate change crisis. “We call on institutions and governments to ensure climate justice at all levels – global, EU, national, regional and community level, in this way we can make climate policy more human centered,” said Cillian Lohan, rapporteur of the opinion.

Stop unfairly penalising those who have no alternative – EESC calls for a genuine polluter-pays principle

In order to mitigate the impact of climate change, it is necessary to change production and consumption systems. Consumers need to be provided with sustainable ethical alternatives which do not mean less convenience, poorer quality or even higher prices. “The polluter-pays principle must be applied to those causing pollution and profiting from it,” said Mr Lohan. The EESC therefore encourages subsidies on fossil fuels to be eliminated.

The Rapporteur on Climate Justice of the French Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC), Agnès Michelot also took part in the COP23 side event. The ESEC opinion adopted in 2016 and the EESC opinion have a high degree of complementarity and convergence and are mapping out concrete solutions at national and European level.

The EESC believes that all citizens have a right to a healthy, clean environment, and not only in Europe. In this context, President Dassis reminded participants of increased migration and how badly prepared Europe is to deal with it and share the burden equally. “Solidarity must be at the heart of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This is a common and inclusive initiative which needs cooperation at all levels of civil societies and between Member States and EU institutions,” he concluded.

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