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# Press Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### *Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in the Second Europol JPSG*

Members of Parliament Etienne Grech and David Agius represented the Maltese Parliament at the second meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on Europol, which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The JPSG on Europol was established less than a year ago at the Speakers' Conference in April of 2017 to allow national parliaments and the European Parliament to scrutinise Europol's activities in accordance with Article 51 of the Europol Regulation. Based on the newly adopted Rules of Procedure, JPSG parliamentarians can now ask questions directly to Europol on its activities, including in writing and in between meetings.

During this second meeting, the JPSG adopted its Rules of Procedure for the JPSG. This was possible thanks to consultations that had taken place prior to the start of the meeting which focused on addressing the specific concerns of a few delegations who could not accept the draft as presented in the first constituent meeting held in October 2017.

Following the adoption of the Rules of Procedure, the JPSG discussed the past and future Europol cooperation with the Western Balkan countries, which was followed by a presentation and a debate with parliamentarians on Europol's External Strategy 2017-2020. Following this, the European Data Protection Supervisor delivered a presentation on the EDPS' activities in 2017 and its ongoing work, followed by a debate. Europol's Executive Director Rob Wainwright delivered a presentation on Europol's Draft Multiannual Programming for 2019-2021, during which he also mentioned Malta's recent request for Europol's assistance in the fight against organised crime.

Based on Article 51 of the Europol Regulation, the JPSG on Europol can request Europol's Executive Director, Deputies, and the Chairperson of the Europol Management Board to address specific issues related to Europol's activities with the aim of strengthening democratic legitimacy and accountability of Europol. A parliamentary delegation will be allowed to attend the meetings of the Europol Management Board to further strengthen this aim.

In the afternoon, the Maltese delegation participated in the discussion on how to counter illegal content online and how to optimise cybersecurity, with the participation of EU Commissioner for the Security Union Sir Julian King, and EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel. The meeting also discussed Europol's contribution to the fight against terrorism and the prevention of organised crime.

**Attachments: none**

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Following the successful adoption of the Rules of Procedure, the JPSG on Europol will be holding two meetings per year.