

Concept of the Assessment of JHA Agencies Network

I. Introduction

The JHA Agencies Network (JHAAN) was established by four agencies (CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol and Frontex) in 2010 to increase inter-agency cooperation and explore synergies in areas of common interest. Ten years of existence is an opportunity to assess the value of the network in enhancing inter-agency cooperation by implementing the EU priorities in the areas of freedom, security and justice and in aligning activities in areas of common interest.

The Heads of the JHA agencies agreed to have a thorough reflection on the functioning and value of the network that will open up the discussion surrounding the future of JHAAN and the way forward.

The JHAAN evaluation exercise has been prepared by JHAAN contact points in 2020 during the chairmanship of Eurojust and will be launched by Frontex under its chairmanship in 2021. The launch of the evaluation in 2021 provides an opportunity to include the experience from 2020 when the network had to continue functioning in different circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Background

In 2009, the Council requested **CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol and Frontex** to improve their cooperation and to propose new methods that should translate into concrete actions, including *“inter alia, guidelines for strategic and operative work, common standards, joint training initiatives, development of working methods and routines for practical cooperation”*.

Following the agencies’ joint report to COSI on cooperation between JHA agencies, COSI adopted an [approach](#) (EU Council doc. 9441/2/10) to ensure consistency of action. COSI invited the agencies to implement the measures contained in the [2010 final report](#) (EU Council doc. 8387/10) on cooperation between JHA agencies and to organise regular meetings of the Heads of the Agencies as follows:

- These meetings will be chaired by the Head of the Agency that is hosting the meeting and will be attended by representatives of the current and future Presidencies of COSI, of the European Commission and of the Council General Secretariat.
- These meetings will be held as often as necessary and at least once a year.
- The secretariat function will be carried out by the Agency that is hosting the meeting.
- A report of every meeting of the Heads of JHA Agencies will be transmitted to COSI, CATS and SCIFA.

III. Objective

The assessment will cover organisational aspects and how the purpose for which the Network was established has been achieved, specifically in the following **areas**:

- Cooperation between agencies in specific crime areas, including warning and risk analysis
- Common sphere of governance
- JHA information systems and interoperability
- Coordinated approach to EU institutional affairs and external relations
- Fundamental rights and gender equality
- Training and efforts in the field of research and developments
- Raising awareness about the work of the agencies

Based on the assessment report, a reflection should allow the Heads of the JHA agencies to suggest a list of recommendations on the way forward of this network.

IV. Preliminary observations

The Contact Points of the JHAAN made following preliminary observations with regard to the objectives of the assessment:

- ✓ The 10 years of existence is a momentum to reflect on the work done and how to further improve the functioning of the network;
- ✓ We can collect the examples of 10 years of joint work in the different areas, thus using a result based approach to assess the value of the network in enhancing inter-agency cooperation;
- ✓ We should consider the advantages of an informal network and verify whether the network would benefit from a more formalized setting;
- ✓ Hosting the network has an impact on resources; we should see whether we can accommodate those; for instance whether the EU Agencies Network's Shared Support Office (SSO) could provide for secretarial support (document management system, webpage, organising the annual meetings et al);
- ✓ When reviewing the working methods with regard to the production of recurrent joint products and the organisation of the JHA meetings, expert group meetings in particular, we should consider measures to increase their effectiveness;
- ✓ We should draw lessons from the 2020 experience caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in a shift in working methods and practices;
- ✓ We should verify whether we are to evolve from a monitoring and reporting role, including retaining knowledge (institutional memory) to a more coordinating role, for instance, on a certain project or topic linked to the EU political agenda;
- ✓ We should consider avenues to increase partnerships with, for instance, the EUAN SSO as well as the COSI and LIBE secretariat;
- ✓ Similar as to the areas identified above, we should set the framework for future JHA activities (building blocks); the examples are external relations, EU funding projects, digitalisation, fundamental rights and gender equality and raising awareness on the activities of JHA agencies;
- ✓ We should also consider measures allowing for a more long-term planning of JHAAN activities stretching across several chairmanships if applicable;
- ✓ The role and scope of the observers and stakeholders should be reflected upon, as well as the role and tasks of the contact points of the JHAAN.

V. Proposed assessment

The scope of the assessment can be twofold:

1) A quantitative analysis of the overall organisation of the network activities:

- ✓ Number of meeting of the Heads JHA agencies,
- ✓ Number of hosts, including number of FTEs and budget used annually¹,
- ✓ Number of reports presented to COSI,
- ✓ Number of expert groups, including the number of meetings and deliverables,
- ✓ Number of joint products and recurrent joint products.

2) A quality-based reflection on the entire format of the JHAAN, its practical organisational aspects and content

The network should review its work, identify challenges and weaknesses and suggest changes or improvements. The assessment could cover the following chapters:

- ✓ Results and impact for each area (as mentioned above under point III),
- ✓ Working methods regarding the JHA meetings and joint products,

¹ The network has no allocated budget, activities and initiatives are funded by the chairing agency.

- ✓ Role of the hosting agency,
- ✓ Relations with stakeholders & partners, and
- ✓ Role of the network and its long-term plan/vision.

VI. Methodology

1. Questionnaires

To collect the information needed to prepare the analysis, **three questionnaires will be circulated** to the attention of both the JHAAN Contact Points and the Chairs of the JHAAN Expert Groups, who themselves should ensure the internal consultation of colleagues and management (where needed). In the annex, you would find three **questionnaires**:

- A. *Agencies as member*
- B. *Agencies as host*
- C. *JHAAN expert groups*

2. Final (COSI) reports and Scorecards 2010-2020

We should also analyse the final reports to see what in each area has been done/agreed and draw conclusions and observations per area (as mentioned under point III). The JHAAN Contact Points will each make this exercise for the year(s) that his/her agency hosted the network. When doing so, we should record achievements per area and the total number of joint products for each year.

2010 (July – Dec)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Europol	Eurojust	Frontex	CEPOL	EASO	eu-LISA	FRA	EMCDDA	EIGE	Europol	Eurojust

3. Mapping relations with stakeholders

We should prepare an overview of presence and level of representation of stakeholders at the annual meetings: European Commission, LIBE Committee, EEAS, Council General Secretariat, COSI current and future Presidencies. (The Contact Points of the JHAAN will upload on the SharePoint platform the final list of participants that attended the annual meeting in the year that his/her agency hosted the network and Eurojust will make an overview.)

We should take note of specific guidance and/or feedback that was provided by our stakeholders during the annual meetings or in the reporting sessions in COSI and LIBE Committee (*see* Questionnaire B).

The network should look into the roles and related procedures for membership, observership and guests. In that context, we could develop a questionnaire or a survey to consult the observers from DG HOME, DG JUST and EEAS and the stakeholders attending the annual meetings.

4. Look into the relation with partners: Council General Secretariat (COSI secretariat); LIBE Committee Secretariat; EUAN Shared Support Office (SSO)

The host of the JHAAN is in contact with the COSI secretariat (reporting in COSI), the LIBE Secretariat (reporting in LIBE/meetings of the Contact Points of the JHAAN), as well as with the SSO (coordinate activities to avoid overlap and duplication and act complementary to their work, whilst stressing the

specificity of the JHA agencies network). The assessment should also touch upon this and consider additional measures to strengthen these partnerships.

5. Thorough reflection

Based on the information collected, the Contact Points of the JHAAN should discuss thoroughly the functioning and value of the network. In particular, this group should assess the (operational) results, the value of JHA meetings (network meetings, expert meetings, annual meeting of Heads of Agencies, workshops etc.), the hosting role and the value of joint products and reporting tools. They should also identify best practice and make suggestions for improvements to the functioning of the network.

The Contact Points agreed that they would benefit from an exchange on their role and tasks².

6. Assessment report and recommendations

The Heads of JHA agencies should discuss the future of JHAAN and the way forward. For that purpose, the Contact Points of the JHAAN will prepare an assessment report. Following that discussion, the Heads of **the JHA agencies could come up with a list of recommendations on the way forward of this network to be submitted to COSI.**

VII. Timeline

Phase I (Q4 2020 – Q1 2021)

- Agree on **concept, methodology and timeline,**
- Start the process for collecting information at working level within the agencies:
 - three **questionnaires** (deadlines 11.12 and 23.12.2020)
 - the **analysis of the final reports** (deadline 11.12 and 23.12.2020)
 - upload list participants annual meetings (a.s.a.p.),
- Compile the replies received and prepare the **quantitative analysis** and the **overview of participants** in the annual meetings (finalize in Q1 2021 before handover to Frontex).

Phase II (Q1-Q3 2021)

- Map relations with **stakeholders and partners** and prepare the **consultation** (questionnaire/survey),
- Prepare regular **discussions of the JHAAN Contact Points.**

Phase III (Q3-Q4 2021)

- Draft the **assessment report**, including suggestions for improvements to the functioning of the network and options,
- Discussion at the annual meeting of the Heads of JHA agencies in view of approving a **list of recommendations** to be submitted to COSI.
- [Draft the action plan for implementation (2022)]

² What are the internal reporting lines? How do CPs promote the activities of the JHA network? How do CPs value the network meetings, including number of meetings, the option of using videoconferencing, the tour the table, the drafting of minutes, highlights or action lists? How describe the role of a contact point?

Annex: QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire A: Agencies in their capacity as members of the network

➤ Sent to the Contact Points JHAAN

A. The network has developed several recurrent products. How does your agency value these products?

List of products:

1. RELEX Matrix (since 2013, inter-agency use only + observers, annual update, expanded with new sections over the years)
2. Toolbox Foreign Terrorist Fighters (since 2015, marked limited, annual updates)
3. Index of analytical products (since 2015, internal use + observers, yearly produced)
4. Toolbox Migration (since 2018, internal use + observers, annual updates)
5. Scorecard (since 2010, public, yearly produced)
6. Final report (since 2010, public, yearly produced)
7. Digital JHA Brochure (in 2018 and 2019, public)
8. Infographic on inter-agency activities (in 2017 and 2018, public)
9. Infographic on EMPACT (in 2019 and 2020, public)
10. Infographic on External Relations (in 2019 and 2020, public)
11. JHA Agencies Network Repository (SharePoint) (set up in 2016; access requests/maintenance offered by eu-LISA)

Please use a scoring rate from 1 (the lowest value) to 5 (the highest value). Would your agency have suggestions to improve the quality of the product, for example with regard to the process for drafting the document, the size, the design, the content, the recipients and the support (re No 11)?

Please use the table enclosed.



Table products
JHAAN - scoring.docx

B. Has the JHAAN contributed to increasing cooperation between your agency and other JHA agencies? If so, please provide at least one concrete example of cooperation that would not have taken place without the support of the JHAAN.

C. For the area common sphere of governance, Heads of JHA agencies agreed to a mutual consultation on their planning documents. Does your agency consult the other agencies on its planning documents (in particular SPDs and WPs)? If yes, since when? How do you value this exercise? Do you plan to start or change the practice?

Questionnaire B: Agencies in their capacity as Chair of the JHAAN³

➤ Sent to the Contact Points of JHAAN

- A. How did you set the agenda/priorities for the network for the year when you chaired JHAAN? What would you do differently today, also taking into account new practices in that respect?
- B. What were the main topics discussed at the annual meeting and why? What was the outcome/follow-up? Did the network receive specific guidance and/or feedback by any of the stakeholders?
- C. What budget was used for hosting the JHAAN? >5000 / 5000-7500 / >7500 *
What was the impact on staff in terms of FTE in your agency? 1 / 1.5 / 2 / 2.5 / 3 FTE *
Did you develop a JHAAN webpage on your website? YES / NO *
* circle correct answer
- D. Did you face challenges as the host of the network? If yes, please explain.
- E. Did you attend the COSI and LIBE meetings to report on your activities? If yes, what are your views on this? What would be your expectations for the future?
- F. Which JHA meetings were organised during your Chairmanship?

Meeting	Number of meetings
Meetings of the Contact Points of the JHAAN	
Annual Meeting of Heads of Agencies	
JHA expert group on ICT & Cybersecurity	
JHA expert group on Training	
JHA expert group of External Relations Officers	
Meeting of the DPOs	
JHA expert group on Communication	
Workshops or other JHA expert groups	
Conferences or large events where JHA agencies were invited	
Joint COM-EEAS External Relations Meeting	
...	
Total	

Questionnaire C: JHAAN expert groups

➤ Sent to the current Chair of the different JHA groups, i.e. ICT & Cybersecurity, Training, Communications and Data Protection Officers

- 1) Who attends the expert meetings?
- 2) How did you decide on the topics/agenda of the meeting?
- 3) How did you see the co-existence with the EUAN subgroups ICTAC (ICT & cybersecurity) and HCIN (communication)?
- 4) What were the deliverables?
- 5) How do you value the existence of this subgroup? What kind of improvements for the future would you consider?

³

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Europol	Eurojust	Frontex	Cepol	EASO	Eu-LISA	FRA	EMCDDA	EIGE	Europol	Eurojust