

OPINION
of
The Standing Committee on Legal Affairs
of the
House of Representatives
of the
Republic of Cyprus

with regard to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol's activities in the context of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol) and repealing Decisions 2009/371/JHA and 2005/681/JHA

The Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs ("the Committee") has examined on the 11th and the 18th of November 2015 the issue of setting up a Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group ("JPSG") on Europol's activities in the context of the ongoing debate on Article 53 of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and Training (Europol) and repealing Decisions 2009/371/JHA and 2005/681/JHA.

The Committee welcomes, as a matter of principle, the inclusion of national Parliaments together with the European Parliament in the scrutiny on Europol as another positive step towards reducing the democratic deficit in the European Union (EU) and bridging the gap between the Union and its citizens.

However, after receiving information regarding the compromise proposal submitted by the rapporteur and the negotiating team of the European Parliament in the context of the trilogue at the EU level, the Committee, while expressing its respect to the important role undertaken by the elected institutions in the European Union, wishes to state the following:

- Having taken into account the compromise proposal, the Committee expresses the opinion that the said proposal should be improved towards sufficiently ensuring the effective participation of the national Parliaments and, in particular, the principle of parity in the representation of the national Parliaments and the European Parliament. The Committee notes that the proposed composition of the JPSG in combination with the provision to determine its Rules of Procedure by a simple majority of its members, does not sufficiently reflect the participation of the national Parliaments on an equal basis. The Committee further notes that the imperative need for an equal participation should not be set aside, not even in cases where the decisions are taken by consensus.

- The Committee also takes into consideration the suggestion to only mention the setting up of the JPSG without specifying any further details about its functioning, which would be left to be decided upon at a later stage.
- As a result, and given the ongoing debate and the efforts to conclude on a final text regarding the exercise of parliamentary scrutiny on Europol's activities, the Committee is of the opinion that the provisions to be finally adopted must ensure the role and the effective participation of the national Parliaments together with the equally important role of the European Parliament. The principle of parity should be secured by effective means.