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Addressing the impact of a withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union without an agreement: the Union’s coordinated approach

Police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters:
Coordinated approach in case of a withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union without a deal
1. **INTRODUCTION**

On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom notified its intention to withdraw from the Union. The Commission continues to consider that an orderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement, which has been agreed by the United Kingdom Government and which the European Council (Article 50) endorsed on 25 November 2018, is the best outcome. The Commission continues to focus its efforts on that goal. However, two days before the deadline of 12 April 2019, as extended by the European Council, the likelihood of a disorderly withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union has significantly increased.

2. **CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK: EXISTING FALL-BACKS**

In a no-deal scenario, the Union’s legal framework on police and judicial cooperation will cease to apply to the United Kingdom as of the withdrawal date. This means that EU legal instruments can no longer be used to underpin cooperation procedures or information exchange mechanisms in relation to the United Kingdom. This implies in particular, that:

- the United Kingdom will be disconnected from all EU networks, information systems and databases;
- judicial cooperation procedures with the United Kingdom will no longer be pursued in an EU framework;
- the United Kingdom will no longer be able to participate in the EU Agencies and will be treated as a third country with no specific agreement in place.

Whilst the withdrawal will entail a significant change in the way that the EU27 Member States currently cooperate with the United Kingdom, this does not mean that police and judicial cooperation with the United Kingdom cannot continue. Cooperation between EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom on police and judicial matters will have to be based on alternative legal frameworks and cooperation mechanisms, based on international law and national law.

In order to guarantee a high level of security for all citizens, the EU’s contingency planning has therefore focussed on identifying reliable fall-back mechanisms, preparing to revert to alternative legal frameworks and cooperation mechanisms, and making the necessary operational preparations at national level. While cooperation between the EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom will be different, the aim of contingency planning is to ensure a high level of security for all citizens.

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2 Such as the Schengen Information System (SIS-II), the Europol Information System (EIS), EURODAC, ECRIS.
3 Such as the European Arrest Warrant.
4 Such as Europol, Eurojust and eu-LISA.
5 For an overview of identified fall-back mechanisms, see Annex I.
is to ensure that law enforcement and judicial cooperation can continue with the United Kingdom as a third country, in full respect of Union law and without major disruptions.

Furthermore, the United Kingdom’s withdrawal will not change police and judicial cooperation between the 27 remaining Member States. The Union will continue to build an effective and genuine Security Union, where all members cooperate closely. The Union has robust instruments that allow national authorities to exchange information and share intelligence, detect suspects and pursue and punish them through the criminal justice system, protect Europeans online and effectively manage its borders. Likewise, the EU27 Member States will continue to cooperate closely and exchange information via Europol to fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. In addition, the future rollout of border management technologies, such as the Entry Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System will further contribute to a high level of security within the entire Schengen Area. Increased interoperability of all systems will provide law enforcement authorities with more reliable and complete information. The EU27 Member States will also further benefit from the Union’s web of international agreements.

This framework for police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters will continue to guarantee a high level of security to people who live, work in or travel to the EU.

The United Kingdom and the EU27 Member States are aware that reverting to alternative cooperation mechanisms will require adaptations and changes at operational level. The level of adaptation depends on existing national procedures, structures, tools, staffing and other resources and is, therefore, for each Member State to assess. The Commission has worked with all Member States to ensure appropriate contingency action in order to be ready in good time for any scenario.

3. Specific preparations and guidance to Member States

Disconnection of the United Kingdom from EU networks, information systems and databases

The access of the UK authorities to EU networks, information systems and databases will stop at withdrawal date. For centralised systems (including, but not limited to, Schengen Information System/SIRENE, Europol Information System, Eurodac), the disconnection will be prepared and performed by the relevant EU agencies, where necessary in close cooperation with Member States. The Commission is in constant and close contact with the agencies and all preparatory steps have been taken to ensure disconnection on withdrawal day. For decentralised systems, Member States have been made aware of both the need to take action and the steps to take. Accordingly, all traffic through the TESTA connections (Eurodomain) in the United Kingdom will, by default, be discontinued as of the withdrawal date in the event of no-deal. Unless the European Council decides, in agreement with the United Kingdom, to extend further the period provided for in Article 50 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, this measure will be implemented on 13 April 2019.

The Schengen Associated Countries, i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, are also bound by certain instruments of the police and judicial cooperation acquis, to extent that these instruments are part of the Schengen acquis. Therefore, for the purpose of this note the term “EU 27 Member States” has to be understood as comprising also the Schengen Associated Countries, in respect of the instruments that are binding upon them.
Stock of data in EU networks, information systems and databases

The stock of data in the systems, i.e. either EU data in the United Kingdom or data received from the United Kingdom before the withdrawal date, and the actions to take have been discussed with Member States’ experts, taking into account the specificities of the different systems.

In general, with regard to UK data in EU or national information systems exchanged before the withdrawal date, there is no general obligation to delete such lawfully obtained data from EU or national systems, except in two cases: (i) Where the United Kingdom remains the owner of the data, the United Kingdom may request its removal; (ii) in case of personal data, where it will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis, under the applicable rules, such as the General Data Protection Regulation\(^7\) and the Law Enforcement Directive\(^8\), to what extent processing is still allowed. In some cases, there will be an obligation to delete such data, notably UK SIS alerts, which become quickly outdated and therefore cannot serve as a basis for taking coercive measures on persons as well as UK data in Eurodac. Acting upon outdated alerts could create a serious risk for the protection of fundamental rights (e.g. the arrest of a person who has in the meantime been acquitted).

Transition from the Schengen Information System to Interpol for exchange of law enforcement information between EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom

The Schengen Information System II (SIS) enables competent national authorities, such as the police and border guards, to share information for border management and security in EU and Schengen states. The United Kingdom will be disconnected from the Schengen Information System (SIS) and SIRENE cooperation on the withdrawal date. Interpol and its system of notices has been identified both by the EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom as the appropriate fall-back to the SIS for further exchange of law enforcement information between EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom. Both EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom are preparing – separately yet along the same lines – for the transition to equivalent Interpol notices and diffusions for information that is currently shared through the SIS\(^9\). Appropriate use of Interpol channels will ensure, according to the UK Home Secretary, that ‘the UK can continue responding to important operational alerts raised by Member States’\(^10\). Furthermore, Member States are preparing for the switch from national SIRENE bureaux, i.e. contact points for information exchange and coordination related to SIS alerts, to Interpol’s I-

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\(^8\) Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 89.

\(^9\) Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police to centrally share critical crime-related information with all other Interpol member countries. Diffusions are less formal instruments that allow Interpol member countries to directly request cooperation from all or some member countries.

\(^10\) Letter of 15 February 2019 from the UK Home Secretary, Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, to Ministers of Interior and Justice of EU27 Member States.
24/7 global police communications network for their exchanges with the United Kingdom.

Police communication via Interpol is well embedded in all EU27 Member States and in the United Kingdom. Over the last months, in cooperation with the Commission, EU27 Member States have made preparations to ensure that their operational levels are ready to revert to an increased use of Interpol channels in order to ensure police cooperation with the United Kingdom. Member States have examined and adapted their domestic operational procedures, staffing levels, training and IT tools in view of maximising the effectiveness and accessibility of Interpol notices by law enforcement agents on the ground.

Cooperation between the United Kingdom and EU Agencies, incl. Europol\textsuperscript{11}, Eurojust\textsuperscript{12} and eu-LISA\textsuperscript{13}

With regard to the agencies, including Europol, Eurojust and eu-LISA, the United Kingdom will no longer be able to participate and will have to be treated as a third country with no specific cooperation agreement in place. For Europol and Eurojust the rules for the cooperation with third countries will apply to the United Kingdom, including with regard to the use of data. Europol and the United Kingdom can exchange strategic data\textsuperscript{14}, and the same applies to Eurojust. The United Kingdom will be able to share personal data with the Europol under the conditions of its national law. Europol could make use of the grounds set out in its founding Regulation, which allow transfer of personal data to third countries with whom there is no cooperation agreement\textsuperscript{15}. Europol and Eurojust have taken preparedness steps and will be in a position to put in place the appropriate procedures when needed.


\textsuperscript{15} In well-determined cases and subject to applicable conditions and safeguards, the founding regulation of Europol allows for transfers of personal data on a case-by-case basis to third countries with whom there is no cooperation agreement. The founding regulation also allows a set of transfers on a temporary basis, provided applicable conditions and safeguards are met, which include the agreement of the European Data Protection Supervisor.
Handling of pending cases - judicial cooperation in criminal matters

In case of a no-deal, Union law stops applying to all cases in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters that may be pending in relations with the United Kingdom.

Therefore, in case of a no deal, as from the withdrawal date, EU27 Member States (a) may not proceed further pending judicial cooperation procedures involving the United Kingdom and (b) may not issue new such judicial cooperation procedures involving the United Kingdom on the basis of Union law.

Whether such pending cases will be discontinued or not is not a matter of the Union law. It depends on the internal legal order of each of the EU27 Member States, their national laws on cooperation with third countries or binding international agreements.

Where continuation under national law or a relevant international convention is possible, Union law would not prevent Member States from submitting an additional request under the relevant national law/international convention before the withdrawal date. Such requests would nevertheless need to be conditional upon the no-deal withdrawal of the United Kingdom and executed only as from the withdrawal date.

For such pending cases, the relevant international fall-back instruments (e.g. Council of Europe Conventions) and relevant national measures have been identified and discussed during specific technical seminars. Member States have taken the necessary preparedness measures in order to mitigate any possible negative impact on public security that a no-deal withdrawal could have in relation of such pending cases.

Member States have also been invited to examine, as a part of their contingency planning, whether some Council of Europe Conventions and protocols should be ratified to allow for a more effective cooperation with the United Kingdom. Bilateral agreements that might have existed between Member States and the United Kingdom before the EU instruments were adopted do not revive.

Bilateral contacts between the relevant authorities of the EU27 Member States and the United Kingdom, for strictly operational purposes regarding specific pending cases may be appropriate in order to ensure that the transition from EU cooperation to cooperation on the basis of national or international law in ongoing police and judicial cooperation is as smooth as possible in the period immediately after the withdrawal and is without prejudice to the future relations.

The rights of suspected or accused persons will be guaranteed under the relevant instruments of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights, to which the United Kingdom is a party. Moreover, when it comes to victims of crime, they will rely on UK national law and practice for the protection of their rights. The United Kingdom already provides for a set of victims’ rights – that incorporates the EU rules.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Public authorities and stakeholders can find further information on the impact of the United Kingdom’s disorderly withdrawal on police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters on the following website of the Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/brexit/brexit-preparedness/preparedness-notices_en
### ATTACHMENT: Fall-back instruments identified by the Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU instrument</th>
<th>Fall-back</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schengen Information System (SIS) (^1^7)</td>
<td>Interpol databases (documents, vehicles) and notices (persons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries (SIRENE bureaux) channel</td>
<td>Interpol channel, existing bilateral channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europol (^1^8)</td>
<td>Interpol, bilateral channels, possibilities of exchange of data by way of derogations based on Article 25 of Europol Regulation (EU) 2016/794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prüm (^1^9)</td>
<td>UK not connected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Initiative (^2^0) (general framework for sharing law enforcement information between Member States)</td>
<td>Interpol, existing bilateral channels</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters from 2001 (ETS 182)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UN Palermo Convention (transnational organised crime) ensures a minimum level of approximation</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^1^6\) All fall-backs identified are to be used in full respect of applicable EU data protection rules.


| **FIU.Net (Financial Intelligence Units)** | Financial Action Task Force (international), Council of Europe Warsaw Convention, EGMONT secure web |
| **ARO (Asset Recovery Offices)**<sup>21</sup> | Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency network (CARIN), bilateral channels |
| **European Image Archiving System (FADO)**<sup>22</sup> | Interpol Stolen and Lost Documents Database |
| **Cooperation on Football Disorder**<sup>23</sup> | 2016 Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS 218)<sup>24</sup> |
| **Joint Investigation Teams (JITs)**<sup>25</sup> - Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between Member States of the European Union<sup>26</sup> | Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters from 2001 (ETS 182) |
| **Joint Action on Organised Crime**<sup>27</sup> | United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime |
| **EURODAC**<sup>28</sup> | None necessary; UK will no longer participate to the Dublin Regulation (EU) 604/2013 |

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<sup>24</sup> AT, BE, BG, HR, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, RO, SK, SI, ES and SE have not ratified. UK has not ratified.

<sup>25</sup> Council Resolution on a Model Agreement for setting up a Joint Investigation Team (JIT), OJ C 18, 19.1.2017, p. 1.


<sup>28</sup> Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the establishment of ‘Eurodac’ for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cybercrime Directive²⁹</th>
<th>2001 CoE Convention on Cybercrime (ETS 185)³⁰ with 2003 Additional Protocol concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (ETS 189)³¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography³²</td>
<td>2007 CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS 201)³⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combating child pornography on the internet³³</td>
<td>Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings³⁵</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person and on requests for the comparison with Eurodac data by Member States' law enforcement authorities and Europol for law enforcement purposes, and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice, OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 1.


³⁰ IE and SE have not ratified.

³¹ AT, BE, BG, EE, HU, IE, IT, MT and SE have not ratified. UK has not ratified.


³⁴ IE has not ratified.


³⁶ Ratified by all Member States.
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<tr>
<th>European Arrest Warrant(^\text{37})</th>
<th>1957 CoE Convention on Extradition (ETS 24)(^\text{38})</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1975 First Additional Protocol (ETS 86)(^\text{39})</td>
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<td>1983 Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (ETS 98)(^\text{40})</td>
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<td>2010 Third Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (CETS 209)(^\text{41})</td>
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<td>2012 Fourth Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition (CETS 212)(^\text{42})</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Investigation Order(^\text{43})</td>
<td>1959 CoE Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (ETS 30)(^\text{44})</td>
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<td>1978 Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (ETS 99)(^\text{45})</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001 Second additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (ETS 182)(^\text{46})</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001 CoE Convention on Cybercrime (ETS 185)(^\text{47})</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^{38}\) Ratified by all Member States and the UK.

\(^{39}\) Not ratified by the UK or AT, FI, FR, DE, EL, IE and IT.

\(^{40}\) Not ratified by FR, EL, IE and LU.

\(^{41}\) Not ratified by BE, BG, CZ, HR, EE, EL, IE, FI, FR, HU, IT, LU, MT, PL, PT, SE and SK.

\(^{42}\) Only ratified by the UK, and LV, AT and SI.


\(^{44}\) Ratified by all Member States and the UK.

\(^{45}\) Ratified by all Member States and the UK.

\(^{46}\) Not ratified by EL, IT and LU.

\(^{47}\) Not ratified by IE and SE.
| **European Freezing and Confiscation Orders**\(^{48}\) | 1990 CoE Convention on Laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime (ETS 141)\(^{49}\)  
2005 CoE Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS 198)\(^{50}\) |
|---|---|
| **Transfer of Prisoners**\(^{51}\) | 1983 CoE Convention on the transfer of sentenced persons (ETS 112)\(^{52}\)  
1997 Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (ETS 167)\(^{53}\)  
2017 Protocol amending the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (CETS 222)\(^{54}\) |
| **European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS)**\(^{55}\) | Article 13 of the 1959 CoE Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters |
| **Mutual Recognition of Financial Penalties**\(^{56}\) | 1970 CoE Convention on the International Validity of Criminal Judgments (ETS 70)\(^{57}\) |

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\(^{49}\) All Member States and the UK have ratified.  

\(^{50}\) Not ratified by AT, CZ, EE, FI, IE, LT and LU.  


\(^{52}\) All Member States and the UK have ratified.  

\(^{53}\) Not ratified by IT, PT and SK.  

\(^{54}\) Not ratified by any Member States or the UK.  


\(^{57}\) Not ratified by the UK or HR, CZ, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, PL, PT and SK.