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PRESS RELEASE

Europol and the APPF step up their cooperation to strengthen the EU democratic resilience

The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (APPF) signed today a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their cooperation.

The Memorandum was signed by APPF Director Pascal Schonard and Europol Executive Director Catherine De Bolle at the APPF premises at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

This agreement aims to pave the way for Europol and the APPF to benefit from each other's networks and to exchange strategic information falling under their respective mandates. The cooperation covers unlawful use of personal data, such as data theft, data leaks or deep-fakes, that pose a serious challenge for European democracy if used in an electoral context.

Under this new, strengthened framework, Europol and the APPF will cooperate each within their mandate, leveraging their respective expertise and networks to strengthen the resilience of EU democracies.

In line with its awareness raising activities, the APPF has recently joined the Europol Data Protection Expert Networks, has participated in the Europol Cybercrime conference in October 2023, and will be joining the next European Union Cybercrime Task Force meeting, as facilitated by Europol. Europol is also actively participating in the APPF's table-top exercises on European elections integrity.

Europol's Executive Director, Catherine De Bolle, commented: *“The signature of this Memorandum of Understanding is a strong signal of our shared recognition of the need to strengthen the resilience of EU democracies against criminal threats. This is especially true in regards to cybercrime, in an evolving context of digital transformation of our democracies, associated disinformation campaigns, and rising extremism.”*

The APPF Director, Pascal Schonard, commented: *“Europol as the European Union's law enforcement agency, and the Authority as a guardian of democratic integrity at EU level, have complementary mandates to address increasingly sophisticated cyber-enabled threats to our democracies. Today, we are giving a future-proof basis to our continuing cooperation to counter unlawful interference in EU democracy.”*

About Europol

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, Europol supports the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. The Agency also work with many non-EU partner countries and international organisations. From its various threat assessments to its intelligence-gathering and operational activities, Europol has the tools and resources it needs to do its part in making Europe safer.

About the APPF

The Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations is an independent body of the Union which has its seat in the European Parliament. It delivers registration and verification procedures in relation to European political parties and foundations. It controls the European political parties' and foundations' compliance with the applicable EU Regulation. In 2019, the legislator additionally mandated the Authority to impose sanctions against European political parties and foundations that would try to influence European elections by illegally abusing personal data, including by cyber-enabled means.

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