



Know your rights

The Europol Convention, which set up Europol and the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB), includes provisions relating to individuals' rights and the protection of the personal data that Europol collects and analyses. The JSB is an independent body that reviews Europol's activities to make sure the storage, processing and use of personal data do not violate the rights of the individual. The JSB has published this leaflet to give you information about Europol, its activities, and your rights.

What is Europol?

Europol is the European Union law enforcement organisation. Its aim is to improve the effectiveness of, and co-operation between, the competent authorities of the member states in preventing and combating serious international organised crime such as:

- drug trafficking;
- illegal immigration networks;
- terrorism;
- forgery of money (the Euro) and other means of payment;
- trafficking in human beings, including child pornography;
- illegal vehicle trafficking; and
- money-laundering..

Europol is a support service for the law enforcement agencies of the EU member states. Europol collects and analyses personal information on individuals from police authorities in all member states relating to the crimes mentioned above.

Europol has no executive powers and its officials cannot arrest suspects or act without the approval of national authorities. However, the support Europol provides consists of tools that can contribute to measures carried out by the relevant national authorities. These tools are:

- a fast exchange of information;
- sophisticated intelligence analysis; and
- co-ordination, expertise and training.

What are my rights?

Right of access

- You have the right to access any information that Europol may hold on you, or you can ask to have this information checked. There is no charge for this.
- Europol has to deal fully with your request within three months.
- However, Europol may refuse to provide access to your information if it is necessary to:
 - enable Europol to fulfil its duties;
 - protect security and public order or to prevent crime; or
 - protect the rights and freedoms of third parties.

If you are not satisfied with Europol's decision you may appeal to the JSB. You may also refer the matter to the JSB if you do not receive a response to your request within three months.

Right of correction or deletion

You have the right to ask Europol to correct or delete incorrect data relating to you. If you are not satisfied with Europol's reply, or if you do not receive a reply within three months, you may refer the matter to the JSB.

Other rights

You have the right to ask your national data protection authority (DPA) to check whether the competent authority in your member state has lawfully communicated personal information about you to Europol. You can also ask the DPA to check that the competent authority has lawfully consulted Europol about your personal information.

You have the right to ask the JSB to make sure that Europol has lawfully and accurately collected, stored, processed and used your personal information.

How do I make a request for access?

You need to write to a competent authority in any of the member states. Your national competent authority is:

Serious Organised Crime Agency
Public Information Compliance Unit
PO Box 8000
London
SE11 5EN

You can write your request in any EU official language. The national authority will then send your request to Europol.

Can I appeal Europol's decision?

Yes. The Appeals Committee of the JSB is responsible for hearing appeals. You need to write to the JSB within three months of receiving a reply from Europol. If you made a request for access, or for information to be checked, corrected or deleted, more than three months ago but have not yet received a reply from Europol, you may also refer the matter to the JSB.

In your letter to the JSB you should:

- describe your complaint, making it clear who you are, what you are complaining about and on what grounds;
- include any supporting documents, such as a copy of your request for access and any letters you may have received from Europol; and
- provide some proof of identity, such as a photocopy of your passport.

Once the JSB has received your complaint, we will write to you within four weeks to acknowledge it and to provide you with some general information on the appeals procedure. You may withdraw your appeal at any time.

Decisions taken by the Appeals Committee are final.

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