The Hague, 22 July 2026

Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) Secretariat
To the attention of the JPSG Co-Chairs
By email only:
jpsg.libesecretariat@europarl.europa.eu

Europol answer to written question from Member of the Dutch Parliament Alexander van Hattem, to the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG)

Dear Co-Chairs,

In accordance with Article 4.2 of the JPSG Rules of Procedure and Article 51 of the Europol Regulation, Europol would like to respond to the questions raised by the national Member of Parliament of the Netherlands, Mr Alexander van Hattem, to the JPSG on Europol, received by Europol on 15 December 2025, as follows:

1. Questions

On 17 November 2025, Europol posted the following statement in a press release: 'Europol supported eight countries in identifying and removing racist and xenophobic propaganda shared on gaming and gaming-related platforms. The Referral Action Day, involving Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, led to the referral of thousands of URLs leading to dangerous and illicit online material. Conducted on 13 November 2025, this operational action by the European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) involved the referral of thousands of URLs leading to dangerous and illicit online material.'

1. Can Europol indicate exactly what it means by 'dangerous and illicit online material' and what criteria it uses to assess this? To what extent does 'dangerous' material also include non-criminal material?
2. If it includes non-criminal material, can Europol indicate how this has been dealt with?
3. Can Europol indicate what the legal bases are for these actions, particularly as regards the situation in the Netherlands?
4. The press release specifically mentions 'xenophobic content'. Can Europol explain what exactly is meant by this, what criteria are used to assess it, and on what basis the investigation is conducted? Can Europol also indicate to what extent 'xenophobic content' involves non-criminal material?
5. Can Europol indicate how freedom of expression is taken into account in answering the previous question?
6. The press release also states that the action involved 'around 5 408 links to jihadist content', which thus formed the great majority of the referrals. Can Europol indicate to what extent it also takes action against jihadist and/or terrorist organisations that disseminate jihadist content of this kind? Can Europol also indicate to what extent it is clear that such jihadist content is being posted from EU Member States (more specifically from the Netherlands)?
7. Can Europol indicate whether and, if so, which non-EU countries and/or organisations are involved in posting jihadist content?

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The questions are answered in English language, as follows:

Europol's mandate, which is set out in the **Europol Regulation (ER)**[1], includes supporting Member States in preventing and combating **terrorism** and forms of **serious crime** as referred to in Annex 1 of the ER which includes **racism** and **xenophobia** with respect to **violent extremism** (cf. Questions 2 and 3). Accordingly, Europol supports Member States to implement investigative and operational actions to strengthen actions by the competent authorities of the Member States that fall within the scope of the designated mandate. While the **ER applies directly in Member States**, as set out in Article 77(2) of the ER (cf. Question 3), the corresponding Framework Decision[2] sets out the **criteria** for **criminal racist** and **xenophobic offences** (cf. Question 4) including **public dissemination online**, which exceed the freedom of expression and pose a danger to the security interests of the EU and its citizens (cf. Questions 1 and 5).

The related actions targeting such **criminal activities**, fall under the scope of the **European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)**. The Centre has dedicated Analysis Projects (APs) to support Member States in the corresponding cross-border investigations and operational actions[3]. The ECTC hosts the **EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU)** to coordinate and share the identification tasks of relevant **suspected criminal content online**, including **jihadist material**, with relevant partners, with a view to carrying out and supporting referrals of suspected criminal content swiftly and effectively (cf. Questions 1, 4 and 6).

The operational example referred to in the question is a **Referral Action Day** conducted in November 2025 by Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and supported by Europol, which led to the referral of thousands of URLs leading to illicit online material. **Jihadist terrorist** related activities **affect EU Member States**, and have a **global reach**[4] as also outlined in Europol's **Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2026 (EU TE-SAT)**[5] (cf. Questions 6 and 7).

I hope that this answer will prove satisfactory. Europol remains available for further clarifications.

Yours sincerely,

Alfredo Nunzi
Head of the Institutional and Legal Affairs Department

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[1] Published at: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/794/2026-01-11
[2] Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, published at: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2008/913/oj
[3] https://www.europol.europa.eu/how-we-work/europol-analysis-projects
[4] https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/counter-terrorism-operation-disrupted-islamic-state-khorasan-province-activities
[5] https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2026-eu-te-sat