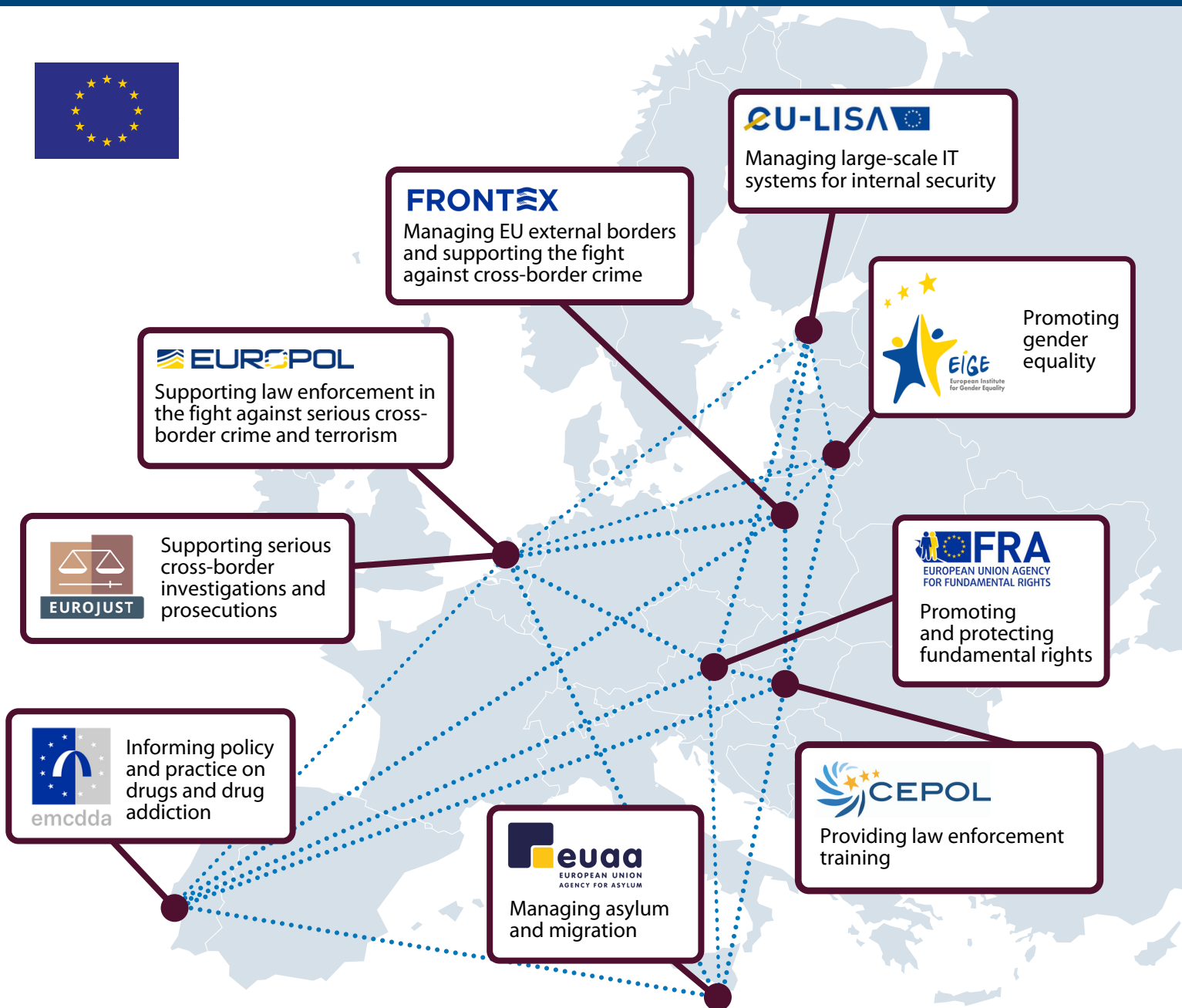


COVID-19

Response of EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies

Supporting Member States and EU Institutions to:

- meet the operational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- gather expertise and provide analyses;
- foster dialogue and learning between key stakeholders.





#JHAagencies #StrongerTogether

COVID-19 RESPONSE





Summary of main actions taken by EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies

During the pandemic, JHA agencies have supported Member States and EU institutions to ...





	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
<p>Promoting and protecting fundamental rights and gender equality</p> 	<p>Support to stakeholders by establishing a dedicated webpage with statistics and EIGE's resources to highlight the different realities women and men are facing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (EIGE)</p> <p>Association with the EAW coordination group initiated by the Commission to facilitate exchanges of information in case of urgent need (e.g. COVID-19, ECJ rulings ...) (2020-2021) (Eurojust, FRA)</p>	<p>Study on the implications of COVID-19 for women victims of intimate partner violence (EIGE)</p> <p>Analysis of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 from a gender perspective, including an EU-wide online panel survey on the sustaining impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance from the gender equality perspective (EIGE)</p> <p>Monthly bulletins (April 2020-June 2021; September- October 2020) on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on fundamental rights across the 27 EU Member States - in different areas of daily life, including work, education, travel, and the judicial system. In addition to declarations of states of emergency, the bulletins look at certain population groups disproportionately affected by the pandemic, such as people with disabilities, older people, detainees, homeless people and victims of domestic violence; at issues such as xenophobic speech, harassment and</p>	<p>Online public debate on fair technologies to safeguard public Health, drawing from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey data and monthly bulletin on the impact of COVID-19 and contributions to public hearings of the European Parliament on the topic (FRA)</p> <p>Raising awareness on the gender perspective to the Covid-19 pandemic and providing gender equality expert contributions to events and discussions on the topic, organised by EU and MS institutions (EIGE)</p> <p>Fundamental rights expert contributions to public hearings, institutional events and discussions on the topic, organized by the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission (FRA)</p> <p>Joint statement calling on the EU and Member States to bolster</p>

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
		<p>violent attacks, disinformation and fake news relating to the virus; <u>Bulletin 2</u> had a special focus on contact tracing apps; <u>Bulletin 3</u> had a special focus on the fundamental rights of older persons in relation to responses to COVID-19; <u>Bulletin 4</u> had a special focus on racism, asylum and migration, disinformation, and data protection and privacy; <u>Bulletin 5</u> was dedicated to the impact of COVID-19 on Roma and Travellers; <u>Bulletin 6</u> had a focus on social rights and <u>Bulletin 7</u> had a focus on the vaccine rollout and equality of access in the Eu (FRA)</p> <p>Sex-disaggregated statistics that reflect the impact of the pandemic on women and men (EIGE)</p> <p>Reflecting on implications of COVID-19 from gender perspective in all ongoing EIGE’s research (e.g. study on psychological violence and coercive control; Gender equality in academia and research) (EIGE)</p> <p>Gender impacts of COVID-19 on Health as part of Gender Equality Index 2021 (EIGE)</p>	<p>measures to protect victims of domestic violence (FRA, EIGE)</p> <p>‘Stories of hope’ on social media from civil society partners, showing how they give essential support to at risk communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (until June 2020) (FRA)</p> <p>Dedicated webpage on FRA activities on the impact of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on fundamental rights in the EU (FRA)</p> <p>On 7 December 2020, Europol and the German Presidency of the EU organised the high-level Video Conference of the EU Police Chiefs on “Internal Security Challenges in the EU” with participation of HOME Commissioner Johansson. On that occasion, the EU Police Chiefs expressed support to the Action Plan against racism (Europol)</p> <p>In 2021, within the framework of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, the Accountability Principles for Artificial Intelligence (AP4AI) project was launched. It will define and validate a set of universal Accountability for AI Principles for internal security practitioners</p>

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		<p>COVID-19 and care as the thematic focus of Gender Equality Index 2022 (EIGE).</p> <p>Research to assess how gender equality and gender mainstreaming are reflected in COVID-19 recovery, including EU Recovery and Resilience Facility and national recovery plans. Results expected Q2 2023 (EIGE).</p> <p>FRA's Fundamental Rights Report 2021 had a focus section on the impact of COVID-19 on fundamental rights – <u>The coronavirus pandemic and fundamental rights: A year in review</u> (June 2021) (FRA)</p> <p><u>Key findings</u> (March 2021) from consultation with Fundamental Rights Platform on the impact of COVID-19 measures on the work of human rights civil society (FRA)</p> <p>Report (September 2021) on <u>'Protecting civic space in the EU'</u>, including sub chapter on how COVID-19 has exacerbated challenges facing civil society (FRA)</p> <p>Interviews carried out for FRA's periodic, large-scale surveys on Roma, and immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Both surveys included questions on the</p>	<p>including the justice sector, in their use of AI. The project ensures consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including: Law enforcement agencies and border police; Justice and Judiciary; Human rights experts; legal AI experts; Ethical AI experts; Civil Society and NGOs; Technical AI experts; Citizens. (Europol and CENTRIC and, supported by FRA, Eurojust, EUAA and CEPOL)</p> <p>Video blogs looking into issues such as the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and equality of access in the EU and tackling disinformation (FRA)</p> <p>Fundamental Rights Forum (October 2021): Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was one of two overarching topics of the forum, which also addressed six distinct fundamental rights themes (FRA)</p> <p>'Fundamental Rights Dialogues' where young people had the opportunity to discuss with FRA' Director their human rights concerns and aspirations and have their say about human rights in Europe. The impact of COVID-19 was a topic of</p>

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
		<p>impact of COVID-19 to the respondents, and the results will be available in 2022-2023 (FRA)</p>	<p>discussion in all three Dialogues (FRA)</p> <p>Fundamental Rights Platform (FRA civil society network) online conference on ‘Human rights work in challenging times - ways forward’ with a focus on COVID impact on civil society’s human rights work (FRA)</p>
<p>Managing Large-Scale IT Systems for Internal Security and Justice</p>    	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic did not affect the continuity of the operations of the existing core systems managed by eu-LISA. All existing systems (Eurodac, SIS II and VIS) have been available to Member States without interruption nor major incidents (eu-LISA)</p> <p>The development of the new information management architecture, i.e., EES, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN and interoperability components continued, and eu-LISA took various mitigation measures to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing projects. Nevertheless, considering the difficult circumstances affecting the supply chains of hardware and the efficiency of the project teams as well as the preparations in the Member States, the JHA Council endorsed on 9 December 2021 as well as on 11-12</p>	<p>Thorough analysis and various documents have been issued on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on eu-LISA’s operations and the development of new systems and the interoperability architecture (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Additional studies were carried out to define the long-term strategy of the Agency subsequent to the pandemic and the lessons learned (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Two surveys were circulated to Member States to collect information concerning the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their national planning with regard to EES, ETIAS and the interoperability package (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>Daily information on the status of its operations provided to eu-LISA management and periodically to the European Commission (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Over 140 situation reports and guidelines as well as dedicated information repository, including a FAQ section, were provided by a tactical Task Force aimed at sustaining the continuous operations of the Agency while maximising the safety of staff. The satisfaction rate with regular COVID-19 communication was higher than 90%, based on the respective survey (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Dedicated Information and Q&A sessions on COVID-19 measures and updates related to the Agency’s Re-Entry Plan were shared via the</p>

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	<p>July 2022 revised timelines for the entry-into-operation of the new systems (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Since the start of COVID-19, most of the meetings of the governance bodies of the Agency and training courses on the use of the IT systems addressed to Member States took place in the VC format. Only some Management Board meetings and some two training courses have been organised in a face-to-face set up. In 2022, eu-LISA has started a gradual return to physical meetings of the governance bodies as well as training courses (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Despite the challenges of the pandemic, in March 2021, Europol launched the SIRENE Office and is thus becoming part of the SIRENE Network to receive information on the terrorism related alerts and exchange supplementary information with MS (Europol)</p>	<p>The COVID-19 crisis confirmed the need for further digitalisation of justice. Digital Criminal Justice study was carried out by the Commission in partnership with Eurojust and other EU agencies/bodies and was published on 14 September 2020. The main findings have been included in Justice Commissioner Reynders' broader digitalisation plans, as announced in his 'Communication on the Digitalisation of Justice in the EU' of December 2020. Based on information provided by the Member States on the impact of the measures taken by governments to combat the spread of COVID-19 on judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the European Union (and Iceland and Norway), most of the experienced issues could be easily overcome by having available appropriate digital tools, thereby allowing most of the cooperation to continue as normal (Eurojust)</p> <p>The Future Group on Travel Intelligence and Border Management issued its final report in 2021. It looks into the practical opportunities for optimising the sharing and use of travel related information in anticipation of the full</p>	<p>regular communications from the Executive Director and online staff assemblies (eu-LISA)</p> <p>The external newsletter "eu-LISA Bits&Bytes" provided updates on the latest developments in the Agency's key activities as well as assurance on the continuous operations of the existing systems and progress in the development of new systems and the interoperability architecture (eu-LISA)</p> <p>The 8th eu-LISA Annual Conference, dedicated to the development of the digital Schengen Area, took place in a hybrid format to adapt to COVID-19 imposed restrictions. eu-LISA Industry Roundtable events in the spring and autumn of 2021 were held fully online while the Industry Roundtable in June 2022 was organised as a face-to-face event (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Continuous monitoring of staff wellbeing through staff engagement and wellbeing surveys (eu-LISA)</p>



	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
<p>Managing EU external borders, asylum and migration</p>    	<p>Continued support to asylum and reception authorities in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Malta, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia and Belgium in line with national health regulations; assistance was provided to put in place remote solutions or other solutions enabling ‘face to face’ processes to continue via remote modalities, where feasible. In 2022, operational support started being provided also to RO, NL and CZ (EUAA)</p> <p>Support to relocation of unaccompanied minors from Greece to participating Member States (EUAA)</p> <p>Provision of videoconferencing/remote interpretations services to Member States (EUAA)</p> <p>Provision of personal protective equipment to EUAA deployed personnel. (EUAA)</p> <p>Continued operational support to the Member States along the EU’s external land and sea borders (including</p>	<p>implementation of the new EU architecture of information systems for borders, migration and security (Frontex and Europol)</p> <p>Dissemination of a weekly COVID-19 situation report with information from open sources including an overview of COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Member States, vaccination data and the state of play of operational activities, to national authorities, the European Commission and other European institutions (Frontex)</p> <p>Analyses of how the asylum and reception authorities of EU+ Member States adapted their working methods concerning remote asylum interviews, online asylum registrations, Dublin transfers, remote court hearings and management of reception centres, including the issuing of recommendations (EUAA)</p> <p>Publication of the annual risk analysis for 2021 which provides a comprehensive picture of the situation at Europe’s external borders and cross-border crime challenges, including the effect of the pandemic on border control (Frontex)</p>	<p>Network meetings continued by videoconference and as of late 2021 in hybrid format, addressing various aspects of the asylum process as well as in relation to resettlement, including the challenges arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (EUAA)</p> <p>Exchanging situational updates with international partners and preparing new cooperation and capacity building activities covering health-related measures at the borders (Frontex)</p> <p>Enhancing cooperation with EU partners on health-related matters, notably with ECDC (Frontex)</p> <p>Three meetings on the conduct of remote personal interview, on remote registration (2020) and on remote personal interview and innovation of the registration process (2021) held to share challenges and good practices to mitigate the effects on registration and personal interview of the</p>

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
 	<p>enhancement of coast guard functions activities), and field deployments with about 1000 officers deployed (Frontex)</p> <p>Continued input to the <u>EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism</u> (FRA)</p> <p>Establishment of Europe’s first uniformed law enforcement service – the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps: as of April 2022, 618 officers are deployed in the operational area and 170 are undergoing training (Frontex)</p> <p>Health and safety of all officers deployed to operations is of top priority. Frontex acquired Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including 150 000 face masks, and established a stock of PPE in four locations (Malaga, Thessaloniki, Lesvos, Warsaw) in case of a sudden PPE equipment market shortage (Frontex)</p> <p>With commercial flights suspended and land borders closed, Frontex activated charter planes to transport the deployed officers and to ship PPE equipment to all its operations (Frontex)</p>	<p>Reports on asylum trends and the impact of travel bans and other emergency measures, which resulted in vastly reduced number of asylum applications lodged in the EU+ (EUAA)</p> <p>Reporting on fundamental rights challenges in the area of asylum, migration and borders as part of FRA’s regular migration bulletins (May, July, November 2020; February, September and December 2021 and March 2022 (FRA)</p> <p>Research findings (November 2021) on ‘<u>Legal aid for returnees deprived of liberty</u>’, covering also the COVID-19 impact (FRA)</p> <p>Reports on COVID-19 risk factors in the main countries of origin such as their demographic vulnerability, coping capacity, healthcare provision, doctors per capita, food insecurity etc. (EUAA)</p> <p>Report on fundamental rights issues at the external land borders, touching upon public health measures implemented at the borders in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, requested by the European Parliament (December 2020) (FRA)</p>	<p>measures surrounding COVID-19 (EUAA)</p> <p>Practical recommendations on conducting the personal interview remotely and Practical recommendations on conducting remote/online registration (lodging) issued to support Member States in facing the challenges resulting from restrictions imposed (EUAA)</p> <p>Group on migrant smuggling initiative launched during the pandemic, following an earlier request of the Council, to provide a platform for prosecutors and investigative judges to exchange good practices and discuss strategic issues related to investigations of migrant smuggling cases. Now extended to Third Countries. First meetings had to be held virtually, including informal workshops twice per year. In November 2021, the group partially met for the first time in person at the EJ meeting on Migrant Smuggling which took place in a hybrid format (Eurojust)</p> <p>Practical guidance on border controls and fundamental rights at the external land borders, also covering fundamental rights</p>





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	<p>Facilitation of voluntary immunisation of deployed officers against COVID-19 and other contagious diseases to increase the health and safety of European Border and Coast Guard and by consequence of travellers crossing the EU external border. Adjustments of procedures to ensure the highest health standards required by the Member States for deployed personnel. Assessments of security, safety and health aspects in the area of deployment of staff. Provision of pre-deployment sanitary briefings. (Frontex)</p> <p>Adoption of a mental health strategy. Provision of psychological and personal support to staff during the pandemic (Frontex)</p> <p>Improvement of health and safety standards, frameworks and capabilities, to address emerging health threats (Frontex)</p> <p>Continued support to pre-return activities and return operations. Regular updates of restrictive measures adopted by third countries. COVID-19 tests offered to all participants of return operations to</p>	<p>Frontex Operational Guidance on the lifting of temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU imposed due to COVID-19, prepared as a follow-up to the Council Recommendation of 30 June 2020 (Frontex)</p> <p>FRA-Council of Europe note on key human and fundamental rights at borders, also covering special measures in case of restrictions due to public health emergencies- published on 27 March 2020 (FRA)</p> <p>Contribution to sanitary guidelines for border control during the pandemic (Frontex)</p> <p>Publication in 2021 of the health and safety guidelines in return operations during pandemics or outbreaks. The document facilitates the organisation and implementation of return-related activities during a pandemic and helps coordinating activities between the Member States, Frontex and third countries (Frontex)</p> <p>2020 and 2021 updated compilations of search and rescue vessels in the Mediterranean Sea, held in ports due</p>	<p>guidance relevant for border checks in the COVID-19 situation (July 2020) (FRA)</p>


	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
	<p>ensure the highest level of safety. (Frontex)</p> <p>Continued implementation of Frontex’s new mandate: voluntary returns, support to EU Return Liaison Officers’ deployments, further development of the Return Case Management System (RECAMAS) model and of the agency’s central IT platform on return. Successful preparation for the implementation of the Frontex Reintegration Programme. Continuation of the deployment of return teams from the standing corps. Possibilities for quick adaptations regarding COVID-19 of national return case management systems offered to Member States (Frontex)</p> <p>Introduction of remote interpretation methods in operational areas, conducted under the umbrella of the Framework Contract for Provision of Interpretation and Cultural Expertise Services signed in January 2020. (Frontex)</p> <p>Europol Guest Officers continued to be deployed in the hotspots (Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Malta and to Lithuania, to perform Secondary Security Checks where these were</p>	<p>to COVID-19 restrictions or other reasons (FRA)</p> <p>eu-LISA was asked to support the eVisa prototype project to test and demonstrate the feasibility of an EU online visa application portal. The project was implemented with the participation of the European Commission and EU Member States. The project started in October 2020 and finished in November 2021. The developed prototype aims to showcase how to digitalise and support the end-to-end process for Schengen visa applications. The results of this project will also support the definition of the technical, budgetary and legal requirements for a future EU Online Visa Application Platform, in view of future legislative proposals concerning the digitalisation of the visa procedure (eu-LISA)</p> <p>eu-LISA supported the implementation of the VisaChat Proof-of-Concept project, coordinated by DG HOME. The purpose of the VisaChat project is to develop and implement a chat-bot application to improve the efficiency of the Schengen visa procedure.</p>	

	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
	<p>necessary given the emerging operational needs (Europol)</p> <p>On top of deployments in the mentioned MS Europol also deploys Guest Officers to Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova in relation to the Ukrainian crisis</p> <p>Visits to the Reception and Identification centres in Greece to observe the treatment of new arrivals and their fundamental rights situation in the COVID-19 context (FRA)</p> <p>Support to capacity-building projects, such as those in the Western Balkans or the Southern Neighbourhood using video-conferencing (Frontex)</p> <p>Joint guidelines on Health and safety updated with specific COVID-19-related measures to ensure the safety of personnel deployed in operations (EUAA, Frontex, Europol)</p> <p>The support through the large-scale IT systems (Eurodac, SIS II and VIS) to Member States in the operational management of EU external borders, migration and asylum continued on a 24/7 basis despite the impact of COVID-19 (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>Specifically, the chat-bot will help reduce the number of information requests received by MS visa authorities from third-country nationals, which are normally handled by consular staff. The project, involving Member State authorities, the European Commission, eu-LISA and external stakeholders, was kicked-off in July 2021 and ended in spring 2022. The results of the project will support the digitalisation of the Schengen visa procedure (eu-LISA)</p>	

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<p>Informing policy and practice on drugs and drug addiction in Europe</p>   <p>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</p>	<p>Immediate support to stakeholders by establishing a dedicated set of online <u>resources</u> and a <u>briefing</u> on the implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs and drug service providers. (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Continuation to operate the EU Early Warning System (EWS) on NPS during the pandemic (EMCDDA)</p> <p>The EMCDDA carried out its activities in the new hybrid working model emerging from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; staff was mostly teleworking from home, with one mandatory working day in the office. Regular meetings of the Incidence Response Team, consisting of the Director, the business continuity manager, the agency’s medical adviser and other key staff were ensured. During these meetings the situation at the EMCDDA and in Portugal was analysed, and updates were then sent to all the agency’s staff. (EMCDDA)</p>	<p>An online (continuously updated) COVID-19 topic hub page and a resources page, including advice to people who use drugs and professionals working in the drugs field (e.g. national bodies, associations, networks and NGOs). The information hub on COVID-19 has been regularly updated with new analyses, supporting documents and other relevant information for practice. (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Briefings resulting from repeated EMCDDA ‘trendspotter’ rapid assessments studies, initiated in March 2020 until July 2021 to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation and responses to it.</p> <p>Five trendspotter briefings: <u>Briefing 1</u>: The impact of COVID-19 on drug services and help seeking in Europe; <u>Briefing 2</u>: The impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use and drug-related harms in Europe; <u>Briefing 3</u>: Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, use, harms and drug services in the community and prisons. Briefing 4: Illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans: Impact of COVID-19. Briefing 5: Impact of COVID-19 on</p>	<p>A Mini European Web Survey on Drugs: COVID-19 launched in April and the results published in June 2020 (EMCDDA)</p> <p>EMCDDA extended Reitox meeting organised in 2020 and 2021 attended by representatives of 48 countries from the EU, Western Balkans and ENP region focused on the impact of COVID-19 on users, health services, markets and within the prison setting (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Together with its national drug observatories, the EMCDDA analysed the responses taken by the EMCDDA national focal points (NFP) to the COVID-19 crisis and the challenges met by the organisations and the strategies produced to overcome these challenges. A report from the study was published in December 2020. Updated information was collected in 2021 during the NFPs meetings (EMCDDA)</p> <p>The 5 Key epidemiological and other EMCDDA expert meetings organised in 2020 and 2021 analysed the direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 on drug users and drug services (EMCDDA)</p>

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		<p>drug use and drug services in Western Balkans (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Briefing 4 and 5 present the results of studies conducted in the Western Balkans, using the EMCDDA trendspotter methodology and published under the IPA7 project (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Two analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on drug markets in 15 <i>European Neighbourhood Policy</i> countries were published under the umbrella of EU4MD project, funded by the European Union, in September and December 2020 (EMCDDA) (<u>1st analysis</u> – <u>2nd analysis</u>)</p> <p>Additional analysis on New psychoactive substances: global markets, global threats and the COVID-19 pandemic — an update from the EU Early Warning System was published in December 2020 (EMCDDA)</p> <p>European drug report 2020 and 2021 highlighting how COVID-19 disruption and a strong drug market bring new threats to Health and security in Europe (EMCDDA)</p>	<p>A new series of webinars around the theme of COVID-19 were organised by the EMCDDA for external audiences. These included 6 webinars delivered between May and December 2020 on the impact of COVID-19 on the different interventions related to drugs in Europe, and one organised in 2021 on <u>COVID-19 and drugs in the European neighbourhood: lessons learned from Ukraine and Georgia</u> (EMCDDA)</p> <p>A new series of meetings on <u>the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug indicators at European level</u> (EMCDDA), and <u>the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug trafficking and drug use in Europe</u> (EMCDDA, CEPOL)</p> <p>Participation of the EMCDDA in CND special event on <u>'COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on the world drug problem: New challenges and prospects'</u></p> <p>The European Drug Winter School organized in 2021 had as main theme: 'Responses to, and preparedness for, health-related</p>


	MEET OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	GATHER EXPERTISE AND ANALYSIS	FOSTER DIALOGUE AND LEARNING
		<p>Spotlight on Health and social responses to drug problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Outlining the main impacts of COVID 19 pandemic on drug availability and use in Europe and discussing how services established to tackle drug-related problems have responded to emerging challenges. (EMCDDA)</p>	<p>threats (COVID-19 lessons learned)' (EMCDDA)</p>
<p>Fighting cross-border crime</p>    	<p>Uninterrupted 24/7 support to national judicial and law enforcement authorities to detect, investigate and prosecute serious cross border crime (Eurojust, Europol)</p> <p>Uninterrupted support to Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) (Eurojust, Europol)</p> <p>The signature of 72 new JIT agreements in 2021 and 36 new JIT agreements in Q1/Q2 2022, publication of eight calls for proposals for JIT funding in 2021 and so far five in 2022, and modifications of funding procedures in reaction to practitioners' needs (introduction of new cost categories and funding without a call for proposals, adjustment of award criteria). Receipt of 191 funding applications in 2021 (including 10 for funding without a call);</p>	<p>Support partners with strategic analysis and thematic reports on how criminals are adapting to and exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic, including in relation to cybercrime, disinformation document fraud, counterfeits, terrorism, migrant smuggling, financial and economic crime and Online Child Sexual exploitation (Europol)</p> <p>Publication of the SOCTA 2021, with a dedicated chapter on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on shaping organised crime threats affecting the EU (Europol). Dissemination of Early Warning Notifications (EWN) to inform EU MS on the criminal attempts to compromise the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC) scheme, counterfeit COVID-19 vaccines and PCR tests. (Europol)</p>	<p>Online meetings organised and/or hosted to facilitate exchange of information and good practices, including on specific challenges encountered by prosecutors and investigative judges during the pandemic – with the European Judicial Network (EJN), the European Judicial Cybercrime Network (EJCN), the European Intellectual Property Prosecutor's Network (EIPPN), the Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (Genocide Network), the Network of National Experts on Joint Investigation Teams (JITs Network), and the national authorities involved in the implementation of the European Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register (CTR) (Eurojust).</p>

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 <p data-bbox="275 304 533 352">European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</p>	<p data-bbox="638 225 1106 432">and so far 122 in 2022 (including 5 for funding without a call for proposals); approval of 42 requests for extensions of JIT grants awarded in 2021 and 13 requests for extensions of JIT grants awarded in 2022 (Eurojust)</p> <p data-bbox="638 456 1055 555">506 mobile offices provided to operational law enforcement staff (Europol)</p> <p data-bbox="638 579 1106 1366">As of the start of the pandemic till 30 April 2022, 714 coordination meetings were organised via secure video links and 48 joint action days were supported by the deployment of a Eurojust remote coordination centre. Full support to 10725 new criminal cross-border cases registered at Eurojust. 2484 cases involved third States. Liaison Prosecutors registered 713 cases and the UK 44 cases. Among the thousands of cases opened by Eurojust, several were directly related to the COVID-19 crisis. In some of these cases, Member States asked Eurojust’s support in specific COVID-19-related offences such as fraud related to the selling of face masks. In other cases, Eurojust has intervened to facilitate the execution of judicial cooperation instruments, such as European Arrest Warrants (EAWs)</p>	<p data-bbox="1137 225 1606 611">Regular mapping of the main practical and legal issues identified by national authorities during the pandemic relating to the issuing of judicial cooperation instruments such as European Arrest Warrants (EAWs), European Investigation Orders (EIOs) or requests for mutual legal assistance (MLA), as well as the procedures for the transfer of sentenced persons and freezing and confiscation orders. This mapping resulted into the publishing of 43 issues of the “Joint Eurojust-EJN Compilation on the impact of COVID-19 on judicial cooperation in criminal matters”, which focused on the measures taken by the Member States to combat the spread of the virus and their impact on judicial cooperation in general terms. From April 2020 to January 2022, this overview was updated on a regular basis to continuously assist judicial authorities during challenging times. The last issue was published on 21 January 2022 (as a Council document-LIMITE). The Executive Summary was revised and published also as a separate Council public document on the same day. At the meeting of the COPEN working party on 11 April 2022, delegations agreed</p>	<p data-bbox="1626 225 2072 392">Public prevention and awareness safety campaigns on the ‘new normal’ after COVID-19, cyber safety at home and safe teleworking (Europol)</p> <p data-bbox="1626 416 2072 874">‘Virtual’ organisation of the 5th (in 2020) EU Day Against Impunity for the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes focussing on the emerging best practice to combine terrorism and war crime criminal charges and of the 6th (in 2021) EU Day Against Impunity on the work done by the EU and Member States to ensure accountability for core international crimes committed in Syria since 2011 (Eurojust)</p> <p data-bbox="1626 898 2072 1356">Organisation by the JITs Network Secretariat of the 16th and 17th annual meetings of the National Experts on JITs. The 16th annual meeting took place in November 2020 and was held completely online for the first time. The main topic was “Solutions for challenging JITs – JITs in the digital era”. The 17th annual meeting took place in October 2021 and focused on “Securing the EU Beyond its Borders: JITs with third countries.</p>


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	<p>and European Investigation Orders (EIOs), impacted by the application of the COVID-19-related measures. (Eurojust)</p> <p>Special operational rooms prepared at Europol HQ to continue large-scale operations on High Value Targets (Europol)</p> <p>Consultation by the JITs Network Secretariat of JIT National Experts regarding the possibility to conclude a JIT by accepting an electronic version of the JIT agreement duly signed by the JIT parties, exchanging original versions only at a later stage. The result of the replies received so far is affirmative (Eurojust)</p> <p>Delivering on high-profile operations, such as Op. EMMA; the recent crackdown of a drug ring smuggling cocaine from Brazil into Europe; the takedown of dark web vendors leading to 179 arrests and a Europe-wide operation to tackle unlawful sanitary waste disposal (Op. Retrovirus) (Europol)</p> <p>Guidelines on Operational Support during COVID-19 pandemic to guide the execution of core business activities despite the physical</p>	<p>that no further update of the compilation would be necessary (Eurojust and the European Judicial Network)</p> <p>In May 2021, publication of the report “The Impact of COVID-19 on Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters- Analysis of Eurojust Casework”, which identified the specific difficulties in the application of the most commonly used instruments of judicial cooperation that resulted from the pandemic. Moreover, the report identified the most frequently committed crimes that were directly linked to the pandemic. It also described the role of Eurojust in relation to these issues and provided summaries of best practices. (Eurojust)</p> <p>Launch of the Report on cumulative prosecution of FTFs for war crimes and terrorism (Eurojust and the Genocide Network)</p> <p>Supplement to the <i>European Drug Market Report</i> on the impact of the pandemic on the drug market and organised crime - joint publication (EMCDDA, Europol)</p>	<p>New trends, challenges and opportunities”. This was a hybrid meeting, combining online and in-person participation. (Eurojust, Europol)</p> <p>Publication of the updated JITs Practical Guide, which offers additional information, based on the improved knowledge and experiences of judicial practitioners in JITs as well as changed practices, including in relation to the digitalisation of justice (Eurojust)</p> <p>Development of a quick check brochure and operational handbook for Advanced Level Document Officers to support them in the fight against document fraud (Frontex)</p> <p>Facilitating good practice exchanges of law enforcements COVID-19 (via Europol Platform for Experts – EPE) (Europol)</p> <p>Europol together with Italy convened four times the Working Group of Police Chiefs to discuss COVID-19 related crime threats and law enforcement responses to these. (Europol)</p> <p>Europol and Italy have also convened two editions of the</p>

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	<p>restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines covered the use of secure video conferencing systems to allow prosecutors to still meet and discuss cooperation strategies on common cases during the pandemic (Eurojust)</p> <p>Connection of more than 2500 competent authorities to the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) (Europol)</p> <p>Launch of the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) on 5 June) (Europol)</p> <p>In 2020, Serbia and Georgia and in 2021 Albania and the United Kingdom seconded a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust (Eurojust)</p> <p>The Europol Innovation Lab, based on calls from the Council and the EU Police Chiefs, established a Core Group on secure communication channels in partnership with the German Federal Police (Europol)</p> <p>Internally, a new video conferencing secured ecosystem (Video Conference for Operational Purposes – VCOP) was introduced, which also allows for the exchange of operational data up to the classification level EU Restricted.</p>	<p>Special report COVID-19 and drugs – Drug supply via darknet markets to understand the impact of these developments on drug markets (EMCDDA)</p> <p>Digital Evidence Situation Report, which provides a picture of the status of access of EU Member States to e-evidence held by foreign-based service providers (e.g. volume of requests, main reasons for refusal or delay, main challenges in the process, etc.) and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of the access to cross-border data - SIRIUS joint deliverable (Eurojust, Europol)</p> <p>Assessing the Threats to the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) fund which is a Joint Intelligence Notification of OLAF and Europol assessing Risk Indicators and Typologies of comparable fraud to prevent infiltration of cross-border crime to the funds (Europol, OLAF)</p> <p>eu-LISA took over the operational management of ECRIS Reference Implementation (RI) in April 2020. Since the takeover, eu-LISA has updated the communication protocol, streamlined the communication</p>	<p>NextGenerationEU Law Enforcement Forum, targeting organised crime threats against the NextGenerationEU recovery fund. (Europol)</p> <p>Support to the Commission in analysing business needs concerning digitalisation of judicial cooperation, as revealed by the pandemic - Digital Criminal Justice and involvement in consultations on the Draft Regulation on the JIT Collaboration Platform via online meetings with the JITs Network and the JITs Network Secretariat to assess certain elements of the Platform’s functionality and key features. (Eurojust)</p> <p>Support Advanced Level Document Experts (ALDOS) in hotspots promoting specific awareness sessions on identity and document fraud in a hybrid (physical and online) mode (Frontex)</p> <p>A dedicated web page on COVID-19 and drug markets (EMCDDA)</p> <p>A webinar on COVID-19 and drug supply via darknet markets (EMCDDA)</p>

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	<p>The number of users and virtual rooms within this application has been upgraded (Europol)</p> <p>Staff was provided with technical equipment and secure connection to work remotely since the day of the lockdown (Eurojust)</p> <p>Creation of a forum to discuss the state of play of ongoing operational activities with the Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in order to better coordinate the activities during COVID-19 (Frontex)</p> <p>Deployment of standing corps officers in joint operations to support the host country in preventing, detecting and combating cross-border crime, including counterfeited sanitary/medical equipment (Frontex)</p> <p>Focus on detection of smuggling of illicit and excise goods including smuggling of forged medical devices, tests and sanitary products (Frontex)</p> <p>Document fraud detections - remote support to Advanced Level Document Officers who work in operational areas and help reporting document fraud (Frontex)</p>	<p>channels and initiated evolutive changes to the software. The mandatory update was released at the end of 2020 with a view to being implemented by all Member States by February 2021. With all the upgrades, ECRIS RI will remain an important application used by Member States for exchanging information on criminal convictions. Thus, it contributes to the digitalisation of justice domain that has increased relevance in the COVID context (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>Within the SIRIUS project,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurojust and Europol conducted several online live webinars introducing the SIRIUS project and key concepts related to cross-border access to e-evidence; as well as in-person awareness-raising session to LEA and judiciary in Spain; - Eurojust, the EJM Network Secretariat and Europol created a series of 4 e-learning episodes discussing specific aspects of cross-border access to e-evidence, such as standardized model forms for voluntary cooperation (available on CEPOL's LEEd platform); - UNODC, UN CTED, Eurojust, Europol and EJM co-organised virtual side-event in the remit of and the session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, where second edition of co-developed Practical Guide for requesting evidence across borders was presented; - Eurojust and Europol co-organised virtual Annual Conference in 2021 over the course of three days to the members of the Advisory Board and representatives of LEA and judiciary (Eurojust, Europol)

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	<p>Implementation of EMPACT Operational Action Plan on trafficking and illegal distribution of medicines, medical devices, fake tests and vaccines (Frontex, FRA and Europol)</p> <p>Continuation of the pilot project “Mobile Operational Support Teams against Cross Border Crime” focusing on the detection of stolen motor vehicles, spare parts, boats, onboard engines and associated document fraud related to circumvention of travel restrictions introduced as a result of the pandemic (Frontex)</p> <p>Launching Operation Sentinel to prevent infiltration of cross-border crime to the NextGenerationEU Recovery Funds (Europol with Eurojust, EPPO and OLAF supporting the operation).</p>		<p>Europol organised the “4th Annual Drugs in Europe conference, Enhancing law enforcement responses to high-risk organised crime”. The conference focused on Europe's unprecedented drug-trafficking situation and its role as cornerstone of high-risk organised crime groups criminal activities. (Europol)</p>
<p>Providing training</p> 	<p>Enable Member States to continue training and education of law enforcement officials among lockdown conditions through utilisation and prioritisation of CEPOL’s available e-infrastructure and online tools: online meeting accounts for 5 Member States were provided and 2 MSs were provided with special restricted course</p>	<p>Completed analysis of operational training needs that have become apparent during this crisis within the EMPACT structure (CEPOL)</p> <p>Completed analysis of operational training needs on domestic violence and child abuse as a consequence of COVID-19 lockdown (CEPOL)</p>	<p>On top of its own outreach, CEPOL provided infrastructure to train on-line 5176 participants by 8 Member States and a partner organisation under the COVID-19 Task Force established (CEPOL)</p> <p>Training sessions - 14724 participations in EUAA training</p>

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 <p>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</p> <p>euada EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR ASYLUM</p> <p>FRONTEx</p> <p>EUROPOL</p> <p>EUROJUST</p>	<p>pages on CEPOL’s LEEd platform, supporting their national distance educations (CEPOL)</p> <p>Contributions to awareness raising sessions on the fundamental rights impact of COVID-19 focusing on, for example, the impact on children’s access to education, equality and non-discrimination, combating racism and xenophobia, older people’s rights and data protection (FRA)</p> <p>Despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, eu-LISA expanded and improved its training portfolio in 2021. Moreover, the number of training activities offered by eu-LISA to Member States grew (from 21 in 2020 to 34 in 2021), along with the number of participants and the training modalities used (i.e., face-to-face learning, webinars, online modules, hybrid learning, etc.). A gradual return to face-to-face learning started in 2021, with two physical training activities (one in cooperation with CEPOL), and continues in 2022 with 5 on-site training activities planned for the first semester. In addition to that, an extensive online training plan is also foreseen combining webinars,</p>	<p>Trainer manuals for the delivery of the agency's curriculum were adapted to facilitate the virtual delivery of both online studies and face-to-face sessions. The updated versions of the trainers’ manuals included further guidance on the e-learning components and specific instructions for trainers on the virtual delivery of learning activities initially designed for the face-to-face training programme (EUAA)</p>	<p>sessions were completed (Jan 2020 - April 2022) (EUAA)</p> <p>Dedicated webinars designed to address the new training needs related to the pandemic: on remote personal interview, supporting staff wellbeing during COVID-19 and communication and provision of information to asylum seekers (EUAA)</p> <p>Two network meetings with EU+ State trainers were organised which focused on ongoing challenges, discussions and exchange of experiences, ideas and good practices related to training delivery in the virtual environment. (EUAA)</p> <p>Temporary replacing face-to-face training sessions as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic and adaptations of training sessions which continued to be delivered via webinars. A limited number of training sessions was delivered physically during the second semester of 2021, adapting to precautionary measures in place and respecting national health regulations (EUAA)</p>

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	<p>e-courses and virtual classrooms (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Training of the standing corps on health and safety and first aid equipment (Frontex)</p> <p>Training sessions on COVID-19 prevention and helpline for staff in English (Frontex)</p>		<p>Adaptation of the existing training material and development of new tools, in order to support the comprehensive delivery of trainings for as long as the current restrictions are in place (EUAA)</p> <p>Participation by the JITs Network Secretariat in online webinars on joint investigation teams, ensuring continuous learning and raising awareness on this topic throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (Eurojust)</p> <p>The JIT Network enhanced its training capacities by creating tools facilitating the involvement of JIT national experts in various events through creation of a pool of JITs Trainers and preparation of checklists on “must-have items” for basic and advanced JITs trainings as well as the development of a case scenario to be used in international and domestic trainings (Eurojust)</p> <p>A new series of webinars to help those working in the drugs field deal with COVID-19. These are held every second Wednesday of the month.</p> <p>Six virtual seminars have been organised to date (EMCDDA)</p>

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			<p>Launch of online courses for border and coast guard officers (Frontex)</p> <p>Online awareness course for border guards to deal with infectious diseases while performing border checks and surveillance (Frontex)</p> <p>New webinar series on topical matters affected by COVID-19 (CEPOL), including a webinar for law enforcement on the impact of COVID-19 on EU drug markets (CEPOL, EMCDDA, Europol). A total of 29 COVID-related webinars with 3874 participants were implemented (CEPOL)</p> <p>CEPOL Online conference on “Policing the pandemic”, in co-operation with the Croatian Presidency, held on 25 June 2020. From 5 to 7 May 2021, CEPOL held its regular Research & Science Conference on-line, organised in collaboration with the Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania, once again dealing with different aspects of the pandemic. (CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol, Frontex)</p>

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			<p>Increased digital learning offer to staff members and learning self-service (eu-LISA)</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing programme built for staff around 3 pillars – Awareness – Prevention – Support (eu-LISA)</p>