

# Agreement on cooperation between Eurojust and Serbia

2019/0807(CNS) - 24/09/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted, following the consultation procedure, the report by Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR (S&D, ES) on the draft Council implementing decision approving the conclusion by Eurojust of the Agreement on Cooperation between Eurojust and Serbia.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament approve the Council draft, the aim of which is to foster cooperation in the fight against serious crime, in particular organised crime and terrorism.

Following the model of similar agreements previously concluded by Eurojust (such as Eurojust-FYROM, Eurojust-United States, Eurojust-Norway, Eurojust-Switzerland, Eurojust-Albania and, more recently, Eurojust-Georgia), the draft cooperation agreement between Eurojust and Serbia provides, inter alia, for liaison officers, contact points and information exchange. It is based on Council Decision 2002/187/JHA setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime.

The explanatory statement accompanying the report highlighted the following points:

In its 2018 [Western Balkans Strategy](#), the Commission stressed that organised crime remains a very serious issue in the Western Balkans and Turkey. Important smuggling routes run through Turkey as well as the Western Balkans. Powerful criminal networks with an international reach continue to operate from and via these countries.

In its [2019 report on Serbia](#), the Commission stated that ‘Serbia should increase its efforts in addressing the shortcomings, and in particular establish a convincing track record of investigation, prosecution, and convictions in organised crime cases’. In addition, Serbia is ‘the most requested country in the region, and overall, the second most requested third country in Eurojust’s casework. Serbia was involved in 34 cases in 2018’.

The European Commission also stated, in its [second visa suspension mechanism report](#), that as regards organised crime, Serbian nationals continue to be reported as one of the most frequently reported nationalities for organised property crimes in the EU, particularly in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy. Serbian nationals have also continued to be one of the most frequently encountered victims of trafficking in human beings originating from the Western Balkans region.

Organised crime groups comprised of Iranian nationals are involved in the trafficking of heroin along this route, as well as the Southern Caucasus route. There remain significant weapon stocks in Serbia, which is a risk in the framework of firearms trafficking.

On 28 March 2019, the Joint Supervisory Body of Eurojust gave a positive opinion on the provisions of the Agreement concerning data protection. It pointed out, in particular, the adoption of new Serbian data protection legislation in 2018.

Based on all of the above considerations, the Rapporteur endorsed the draft Council implementing decision in the area of judicial cooperation, in view of an already existing Europol-Serbia agreement and Cepol-Serbia working arrangement as regards police cooperation.