Europol: place, competences and parliamentary control

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Adopting the own-initiative report by Hartmut Nassauer (PPE,DE) on extending the powers of Europol, the European Parliament calls for a strengthening of parliamentary control over Europol. To date, the data provided to the Parliament with regard to Europol's activities allows only a limited level of supervision, while parliamentary control at a national level has proved overly cumbersome and ineffective as a result of intergovernmental mechanisms. As a result, the Parliament considers it necessary to place Europol under the direction and supervision of a member of the European Commission, fully answerable to the European Parliament. The Parliament also wishes to see provision made for the possible implementation of cross-border investigations. In the event of Europol's evolving into a police unit with cross-border operational powers, the Parliament wishes to see it given a basis in Community law. It also recommends the creation of an independent body with authority to investigate any complaints against the police involving decisions by Europol. With regard to the protection of data, the Parliament calls on the Council to examine the possibility of establishing a smaller but permanent (as opposed to the current temporary) European data inspectorate. Finally the report calls on the Council to incorporate Europol's budget into the Community budget and, until then, ensure that Europol's fields of activities are only extended, provided sufficient financial resources are made available to it.