

1. TRENDS IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

In implementing **action 1.2** (Monitoring and compiling Trends in Forensic Sciences) of the ENFSI action plan, the RDSC will contact the ENFSI Expert Working Groups (EWG) asking them to supply information in a structured excel sheet. The aim is to build an overview of ongoing ENFSI R&D projects and identified trends.

This **survey** will be carried out annually prior to the Joint Meeting and will be made available to the ENFSI membership on the EPE and via the RDSC Newsletter. The aim is to keep the ENFSI community informed and to provide a knowledge base for future topics of ENFSI Direct Grant projects.

2. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The following information is provided to give an overview of some major funding opportunities. The RDSC, however, is not in a position to advise individual institutes on the application process. For details, please seek guidance from your national point of contact or on the EU websites.

2.1 ISF (INTERNAL SECURITY FUND)

The **2nd Framework Programme of the ISF** is currently being published and calls for the Central Programme (EU) are being published in parallel with national (decentralised) activities.

The EU-COM is providing a total of € 222 million to all Member States in the current work programme (2023-25). Member States can apply for calls in the thematic fields of organized crime, anti-corruption, cybercrime, radicalization and EMPACT/Europol.

CURRENT CALLS

Validating new technologies to prevent, detect and investigate organised crime - NTOC

Specific measure for bilateral/multilateral projects

Proposed actions must build on results of previous research and innovation projects. Examples of such initiatives include, but are not limited to, the EU funded projects: COPKIT (H2020), MAGNETO (H2020), CREST (H2020), ANITA (H2020), Ceasefire (HE), PERIVALLON (HE), EMERITUS (HE), BORDERSENS (H2020), PROTAX (H2020) TRACE (H2020), ROXANNE (H2020), RITHMS (HE); ANCHISE (HE) or ENIGMA(HE)

Project proposals must build on outcomes of security research and innovation, especially taking up results of EU-funded activities (18), in order to ensure some of the following:

- improved prevention, detection and investigation of firearms trafficking,
- improved prevention, detection and investigation of trafficking in cultural goods,
- improved prevention, detection and investigation of organized environmental crime,

They must, in all instances, involve training and guidance for law enforcement agencies.

The deadline for submitting an application to the EU-COM is 20. September 2024.

EU call for proposals to prevent and combat trafficking and illegal migration

Summary

- The EU-COM is providing financial resources from the ISF Fund to prevent and combat smuggling and illegal migration in the framework of a call for projects (ISF-2024-TF2-AG-COP- call for proposals of common operational partnerships to prevent and fight against migrant smuggling with competent authorities of third countries).
- It is essential to note that the EU must have added value and at least one other EU Member State must be involved as a project partner.
- It is also important to note that an application is in competition with all EU Member States and any other national applications.

The deadline for submitting an application to the EU-COM is 04. September 2024.

EU call for proposals to support digital investigations and the fight against cybercrime

Summary

- The EU-COM is providing financial resources from the ISF Fund to support digital investigations and/or the fight against cybercrime in the context of a project call (ISF call (ISF-2024-TF2-AG-Digital - for proposals to support Digital Investigations).
- It is essential to note that the EU must have added value and at least two other EU Member States must be involved as project partners.
- It is also important to note that an application is in competition with all EU Member States and any other national applications.

The deadline for submitting an application to the EU-COM is 05. September 2024



Links

https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/internal-security-funds/internal-security-fund-2021-2027_en

2.2 HORIZON EUROPE

Horizon Europe is the ninth European framework programme for research and innovation (2021-2027).

CURRENT CALLS

Better protect the EU and its citizens against Crime and Terrorism [Call: **Fighting Crime and Terrorism 2024 (HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01)**] consists of 5 themes:

1. FCT01 – Modern information analysis for fighting crime and terrorism

- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-01: Mitigating new threats and adapting investigation strategies in the era of Internet of Things

Budget: 5 million

2. FCT02 – Improved forensics and lawful evidence collection

- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-02: Open Topic
- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-03: *Lawful evidence collection in online child sexual abuse investigations, including undercover*

Budget: 3,7 million

3. FCT03 – Enhanced prevention, detection and deterrence of societal issues related to various forms of crimes

- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-04: Radicalisation and gender
Budget: 3 million
- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-05: Combating hate speech online and offline
Budget: 3 million
- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-06: Open Topic
Budget: 6 million

4. FCT04 – Increased security of citizens against terrorism, including in public spaces

- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-07: CBRN-E detection capacities in small architecture
Budget: 6 million

5. FCT06 – Citizens are protected against cybercrime

- HORIZON-CL3-2024-FCT-01-08: Tracing of cryptocurrencies transactions related to criminal purposes
Budget: 6 million

Conditions for applying to the Horizon call

- The total volume of funding for the call is €41.7 million.
- The rate of support is 100%.
- No own financial contribution is required.
- At least two European project partners are needed.
- The project duration may be up to a maximum of three years. The average duration of the programme is 36 months.
- The project proposal may only contain one of the eight themes.
- Opening of the call/start of the call for proposals: 27 June 2024
- **The deadline for submitting an application is 20 November 2024.**

Links

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls_en

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-6-civil-security-for-society_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf



3. SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES



The European academy of Forensic Conference (EAFS) will be held in **Dublin** from **26th to 30th May 2025**. EAFS is the biggest European forensic science event and occurs once every 3 years. It brings together over 1000 forensic science practitioners, stakeholders and partners from across the forensic science global community to showcase the depth and breadth of developments in forensic science.

It will be hosted by Forensic Science Ireland in the same year that FSI celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its foundation.

- **Call for Abstracts:** Late July 2024
- **Workshop Proposal Deadline:** October 31st 2024
- **Registration Opens:** 11th November 2024
- **Abstract Submission Deadline:** 29th November 2024
- **Abstract Reviewing Opens:** 13th December 2024
- **Reviewing Deadline:** 10th January 2025
- **Notification of Acceptance:** February 12th, 2025
- **Close of Early Bird Registration:** 26th February 2025

Link

<https://eafs2025.org/>



4. EFSA 2.0 (EUROPEAN FORENSIC SCIENCE AREA 2030)

It is the aim of the RDSC to contribute to an enhanced awareness of ENFSI members regarding the central scientific themes of the EFSA vision and action plan. Information will be supplied as available to the members of the RDSC and does not claim to be comprehensive.

4.1 MEETING THE FUTURE: BIOMETRICS

In the area of biometrics, one of the focus themes of the EAFS 2.0. vision, the RDSC has identified the following activities that may be of interest to the wider ENFSI community:

ENJOY YOUR LUNCH WITH EAB

In its Lunch Talk format, the European Association for Biometrics (EAB) offers inspiring insights into ongoing research projects and relevant developments in biometrics. Several times a year, you can sit down with EAB from 12:30 – 13:30 h to listen to profiled speakers and discuss your thoughts in an expert community.

This year's talks covered a wide spectrum of topics spanning from Biometric Data Injection Detection, an introduction to the Bologna Online Evaluation Platform and Identity Verification Technology Testing to the forthcoming Forensic Sciences standard ISO/IEC 21043 and a presentation of the Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM) at the US-Department of Homeland Security.

For more information see www.eab.org

EUROPOL STRATEGIC GROUP NOVEL BIOMETRIC CHARACTERISTICS

On 15.02.2024, the Europol Innovation Lab (EIL) launched a new Strategic Group on *Novel Biometric Characteristics* led by Europol and Germany. The objective is to monitor and explore scientific advances in biometric modalities beyond the well-established DNA-/fingerprint-/face-/speaker-/author-/writer-identification techniques.

The current focus is on *hand anatomy* and *keystroke analysis*, but a survey will be carried out to better understand gaps and needs concerning the use of new biometric modalities in the European law enforcement community. These could comprise e.g. gait, body shape, olfactronics or stimulus-induced biometric methods.

The Strategic Group intends to raise awareness, increase knowledge and readiness in the European law enforcement community on the use of novel and multimodal biometrics solutions for criminal investigation purposes. To date, active members are Europol, Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, and Slovakia.

Contact: Innovation-Lab@europol.europa.eu

STAYING UP-TO-DATE

Keeping keep track of ongoing developments and looking beyond the boundaries of one's own field of expertise is a difficult job when case files are piling up on your desk. Beyond established scientific sources, such as Forensic Science International, several platforms offer newsletters on biometric topics on a daily or weekly basis.

Links

www.Biometricupdate.com

www.forensiccoe.org

www.identityweek.ne



4.2 MEETING THE FUTURE: NEW TOOLS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Regarding new tools and emerging technologies, another focus theme of the EAFS 2.0. vision, the RDSC has identified the following activities that may be of interest to the wider ENFSI community:

EUROPOL TOOL REPOSITORY (ETR)

The Europol Innovation Lab has set up a **Europol Tool Repository (ETR)** to host cost-free licensed software shared by Member State Law Enforcement Agents or Research and Technology Organisations.

The ETR is hosted on the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE). The platform is restricted to Law Enforcement Agents only. This environment enables a secure sharing of tools.

Currently, the Europol Tool Repository contains tools you can download, install and run them locally for purposes such as:

- Cyber investigations (e.g. searching seed phrases or identifying the real IP address behind a NATed address)
- Entity extraction
- Semantic analysis and automatic annotation of text data
- Searching large volumes of files
- Processing Base Transceiver Station and crime data
- Translation in 100 languages
- Geo-localisation of pictures

For access contact Innovation-Lab@europol.europa.eu

EUROPOL NEWSLETTER THE LIGHTBULB

Interesting information on emerging technologies can be found in the **Europol Newsletter *The Lightbulb***, which is issued regularly by the Europol Innovation Lab. The last issue covered highlights from our EuCB and EU Innovation Hub AI Cluster meetings and some insights into the Dutch Police interaction with the Metaverse community. In the AI corner of the newsletter, information is supplied on the law enforcement perspective on the AI Act and biometrics.

All Europol countries can subscribe to this newsletter, so please be encouraged to make use of this valuable service.

To subscribe contact Innovation-Lab@europol.europa.eu



Link

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/operations-services-and-innovation/innovation-lab>

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT LIAISON GROUP (RDLG)

As part of the RDSC action plan 2024-2026, a research and development liaison group will be implemented. It is designed to facilitate communication between the RDSC, the EWGs, and the R&D coordinators of ENFSI member institutes. It will play a central role in enabling the RDSC to carry out its task of acting as coordinator to relevant ENFSI-entities on matters of forensic research and development, funding, and innovation in a broad sense. In accordance with the RDSC framework it will support and facilitate communication between all actors involved in forensic research and its end users to promote the transfer of knowledge. Requirements of the ENFSI community shall be identified and suitable ENFSI activities shall be agreed. The RDSC will report on ongoing activities and will collect feedback and suggestions for their ongoing work. It will promote active research in all ENFSI member institutes and will provide a valuable network for R&D coordinators.

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| Format | Online-Meetings via TEAMS |
| Host | RDSC |
| Timeframe | 2 half-days (lunch-to-lunch) |
| Frequency | annual |

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| Facilitators | members of the RDSC (leading through the agenda, reporting on on-going activities of the RDSC, leading breakout-sessions) |
| Participants | R&D officers of the EWGs R&D-coordinators of ENFSI institutes Board R&D liaisons |
| Content | The RDSC will provide a draft agenda according to their tasks and responsibilities and will call for topics in advance to the meeting. |
| Participation | Registration process via the RDSC |
| Output | Minutes and identified actions |
| Starting Point | March 2025 |

5.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ONLINE FORUM “NEWS FROM THE LAB – MAKING FORENSIC SCIENCE VISIBLE” (LUNCH TALKS)

The RDSC will host an online forum *News from the Lab – Making Forensic Science Visible*, which is designed to increase visibility of ongoing research in ENFSI member institutes and EWGs and to encourage co-operation and an exchange of experience across disciplines and organizations. It is modelled on already existing formats within individual European countries, where similar approaches have been taken to promote information sharing and reduce duplication of efforts. The format can also serve as an E&T module for experts on a general level.

The focus of the format lies on the practical side of R&D as opposed to the more abstract, purely descriptive side provided by reports. Member institutes and EWGs will be given the opportunity to showcase ongoing scientific work within the ENFSI community, to collect feedback and advice, and to establish useful contacts to colleagues working in similar fields. With increased transparency, duplication of efforts may be reduced and synergies may be created.

In time, the format will provide a comprehensive overview of ongoing R&D within ENFSI.

The general framework is designed as follows:

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| Format | Online-Seminar via webex or TEAMS |
| Host | ENFSI Secretariat |
| Timeframe | 2 h |
| Frequency | once per quarter |
| Facilitator | members of the RDSC in turns providing a short introduction to the session |
| Participants | Members of the ENFSI community only (experts and management) |

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|----------------|--|
| Content | 3-4 presentations on ongoing or completed research and/or development projects by members of staff of ENFSI institutes As the presentations are directed at a heterogeneous audience, they should not be too technical. Also, they should not contain restricted or classified information. |
| Participation | Registration process via the RDSC |
| Starting point | 1 st quarter 2025 |

6. MISCELLANEOUS

The RDSC is currently working on an **official email address** for the RDSC. However, as there are still some problems to overcome, please continue to contact Christa Dern at christa.dern@bka.bund.de for the time being.

Martina McBride, long-standing member of the RDSC, will shortly be entering retirement and will be replaced by **Dr. Edward Connolly** from the FSI, Ireland. Edward is taking over from Martina as Director of Science and Development at Forensic Science Ireland and will guarantee continuity regarding the involvement of the RDSC in the EAFS conference 2025. Welcome Edward! And a special THANK YOU and all the best for Martina!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR FEEDBACK:

Christa Dern, BKA (Chair)
Bart Nys, NICC (Deputy Chair)
Laura Aalberg, NBI (member)
Lisa Burke, MPS (member)
Didier Meuwly, NFI (member)
Martina McBride, FSI (member)
Eliza Pizarro, Policia ES (member)