

As a further contribution to the improvement of judicial cooperation, the Austrian Presidency has organized a conference on the future of judicial cooperation in criminal matters in Europe which took place in Innsbruck from 28 to 30 September 1998. The conference examined and discussed current judicial cooperation problems.

(<sup>1</sup>) OJ C 251, 15.8.1997, p. 1.

(<sup>2</sup>) OJ L 191, 7.7.1998, p. 4.

(<sup>3</sup>) OJ L 344, 15.12.1997, p. 7.

(1999/C 96/193)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-2683/98**

**by Gerhard Hager (NI) to the Council**

*(1 September 1998)*

*Subject:* Entry into force of the Europol Convention

The Presidency-in-Office is looking to Europol, once it has commenced its operations, to give a substantial fillip to the suppression of organised crime in particular. Europol is to play a central role in fighting cross-border crime. However, numerous questions have still to be answered before the Convention enters into force.

When is the Convention expected to enter into force?

When will the Europol organs finally be set up and able to start work?

What steps have been taken to date to meet the obligations to adopt the implementing measures referred to in Article 45(4) of the Europol Convention, and within what time-frame will further action be undertaken?

**Reply**

*(22 October 1998)*

The Convention on the establishment of a European Police Office (Europol Convention) has entered into force on 1 October 1998. The constituent meeting of the Europol Management Board was also held on that date. The other necessary appointments to its bodies (director, deputy director, financial controller, members of the budget committee) need to be made as rapidly as possible by the Management Board or by the Member States. The inaugural session of the Joint Supervisory Body is also planned for October.

To take decisions as fast as possible on the nine measures referred to in Article 45(4) of the Europol Convention and thus to ensure the earliest possible launch of Europol's activities is one of the Austrian Presidency's central priorities.

Regarding these nine measures, most of which have already been agreed provisionally by the Council and then 'frozen', the following may be stated:

- the procedures for taking decisions on the draft texts of the statute governing the rights and duties of liaison officers in relation to Europol, of the implementing provisions for analysis files, of the Europol Staff Regulations, of the security classification rules, of the financial regulation and of the headquarters agreement were initiated at the constituent meeting of the Management Board on 1 October 1998;
- the national ratification process for the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of Europol, the members of its organs, the deputy directors and employees of Europol, as well as the procedure for concluding the agreements between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the other Member States on the Privileges and Immunities of the liaison officers and their family members, are under way;
- the rules of procedure of the Europol Joint Supervisory Body is to be decided upon unanimously by the Joint Supervisory Body and subsequently approved by the Council.