



European network of Railway Police Forces

## **Philosophy of RAILPOL**

RAILPOL is an international network of the organisations responsible for policing the railways in EU Member States. The aim is to enhance and intensify international railway police cooperation in Europe, to prevent threats and guarantee the effectiveness of measures against cross-border crime.

### *Raison d'être of RAILPOL*

RAILPOL was founded to satisfy the rising need for international cooperation among partners who perform everyday railway policing duties. A standstill situation on the rails would mean a decrease in the level of order, safety and peace in and around the railways of Europe. The citizens of Europe have the right to move freely within Europe, and it is our duty to guarantee and protect the right of freedom, safety and justice.

### *Policy areas of the EU*

RAILPOL ensued from the European Commission's policy of cooperation in the field of police and justice (Third Pillar). Due to the treaty of Lisbon, the structure of the EU has changed. Now, there are different policy areas. One of these is the policy area of freedom, security and justice. This policy area has to ensure the free movement of persons and has to offer a high level of protection to citizens. To guarantee those rights, the EU set out some subdivisions under the policy area of freedom, security and justice. One of the subdivisions is police and customs cooperation. The aim of police and customs cooperation is to protect citizens against crime at the local, European or international level. Therefore, there should be more mutual cooperation among the Law Enforcement agencies of the Member States.

### *Rail Network*

The EU rail network includes an area extending from the North Cape in the North to the Mediterranean in the South, and from the border of Belarus and Ukraine in the East all the way westward to the Atlantic Ocean. Within this area, people can move freely. People have the right to travel freely and live and work wherever they want in the EU (even if some rules regarding border control still apply, such as the Schengen Agreement).

### *Threats*

Due to this freedom, threats such as pickpocketing, vandalism, and graffiti no longer stop at the borders of the different Member States but have become transnational. Organised crime, such as illegal immigration, trafficking of human beings, and drugs trafficking, uses railways as means of transport. Terrorists also use logistic bases, roads, and railways to travel across Europe, even if their goals are not situated within Europe. And last but not least, even crimes involving the illegal dumping of waste and toxic products are increasing and organised internationally.



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### *Mass Events*

Europe hosts more and more large-scale events in a wide range of different areas: sport, politics, protest marches, etc. A lot of those events are organised at the European level. Thousands of people move across Europe, to get to the event location and to return home. The most used means of transportation is the train. Transportation by train is inexpensive, reliable, and comfortable.

### *Consequences*

As the internal borders are lifted, the railway transport network becomes increasingly more important. Persons with and without malicious intentions will use the railways in greater numbers. This requires higher investments on the part of the police, both in terms of time and resources. It also requires a larger, more effective, and more efficient organisation of police services at the national and international level. It is the shared responsibility of all Member States to guarantee a safe transnational railway network and to protect citizens against these threats. Therein lays the *raison d'être* of RAILPOL.

### RAILPOL

#### *Network*

RAILPOL is an international network of the organisations responsible for policing the railways in EU Member States. RAILPOL is an abbreviation of Railway Police.

#### *Aim*

The aim is to enhance and intensify international railway police cooperation in Europe, to prevent threats and guarantee the effectiveness of measures against cross-border crime.

#### *Objectives*

- ✓ to maintain the RAILPOL network
- ✓ to strengthen cooperation between the different national railway police organisations
- ✓ to improve security of the European railway network
- ✓ to prevent cross-border threats
- ✓ to focus on strategic and operational issues
- ✓ to strengthen and develop technical and operational expertise
- ✓ to improve the exchange of information and best practices
- ✓ to set up a contact network of experts
- ✓ to organise general meetings and best practice seminars
- ✓ to implement the principles of operational cooperation
- ✓ to organise joint operations and/or activities
- ✓ to organise, observe, and participate in railway field training exercises



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### *Structure*

RAILPOL is made up of representatives of the organisations responsible for railway policing duties in EU Member States. There is a President (the Chair), a Secretary-General, and the Secretariat (responsible for organisational and administrative duties). The Steering Group, in which all member-countries are represented, elaborates and takes the strategic decisions. The Steering Group is also responsible for defining RAILPOL goals and policies, monitoring their implementation, determining scheduled plans and projects, and consolidating and expanding the network. The Working Groups and Task Forces are groups of experts within RAILPOL who handle specific themes or problems, thus improving the exchange of operational information and techniques. These expert groups also advise the Steering Group.

### *Possible Problems and Opportunities*

The language barrier is the most common problem. There are also many differences among the various organisations represented in RAILPOL in terms of their approach to problems, their organisation, command structures, legal powers, and national legislation. The opportunities presented by those problems involve agreeing on a common language (English), keeping colloquial language use to a minimum, and determining a set of basic police terms in order to work together. The goal is to initiate one single European standard procedure for handling problems. It would also be wise to formulate a common set of rules and standards in order to improve cooperation and enable better monitoring and comparison among member organisations.

### *Strengths of the RAILPOL Network*

The strength of the RAILPOL network lies in the direct contact with the different members, who represent the organisations in their respective countries responsible for railway policing duties. Due to the direct contact with members, any measures RAILPOL proposes and agrees upon can be implemented far more easily and effectively. Also, the high degree of cooperation is coupled with great efficiency, so the dissemination of information occurs at a rapid pace. Intensive contact among members carries over to direct contact in their daily work. The RAILPOL network fosters mutual trust and understanding among the different countries represented and provides insight into the situations various members face. The RAILPOL network has a positive effect on cooperation among European Railway Police organisations in their joint efforts to tackle crime and helps improve safety in and around railway stations.

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