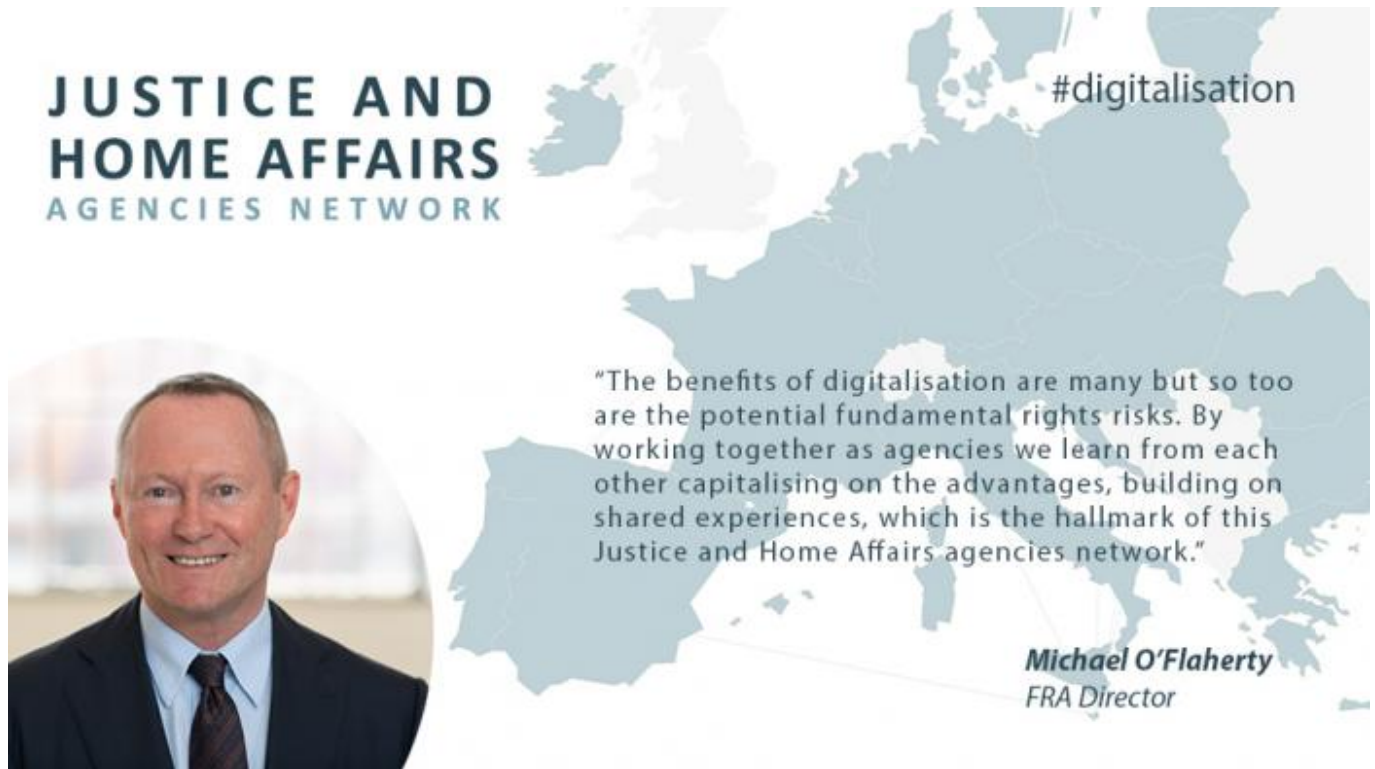


EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies put focus on digitalisation



Eurojust President Mr Ladislav Hamran said: *“Seven months ago the JHA agencies were unexpectedly faced with the enormous challenge of providing support to EU Member States in the completely new reality of a pandemic. I am genuinely impressed by how rapidly we adapted to digital working environments while making sure that the cooperation amongst our agencies continued as before. Now we have to take stock of what we have learned from this experience and move towards even greater digitalisation of our operational methods in the future.”*

All JHA agencies have been able to continue their operational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic with the help of readily available digital and online communication tools. The pandemic has given new insights into how these virtual ways of working can be optimised and, by sharing their experiences and best practices, the agencies now aim to make optimal use of existing capacities and expertise. At the same time, the increasingly important role of Artificial Intelligence in the agencies’ operational activities calls for closer cooperation in this field to ensure that AI development and deployment does not negatively impact fundamental rights.

“The benefits of digitalisation are many but so too are the potential fundamental rights risks,” said FRA Director Michael O’Flaherty. “By working together as agencies we learn from each other capitalising on the advantages, building on shared experiences, which is the hallmark of this Justice and Home Affairs agencies network.”

Following today’s discussions, the Heads of JHA agencies agreed to draw up a

list of upcoming challenges and opportunities for joint initiatives in the field of digitalisation. Aware of the resources that future digitalisation measures will inevitably require, they called upon the EU institutions to make sure that adequate funding is available.

Eurojust chaired today's meeting and has made digitalisation a priority for the coming years. In close cooperation with the European Commission, the agencies will work towards the full digitalisation of judicial cooperation in the EU. With interoperability, secure online communication channels and innovative technologies as its key ingredients, this Digital Criminal Justice project is expected to also benefit other JHA agencies and help streamline interagency cooperation.