

Ireland continues to be integral partner in Eurojust

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Ireland will continue to be an integral and full operational partner in Eurojust as of 12 December, when the new Regulation establishing Eurojust as an Agency will officially apply. Both houses of Parliament (the *Oireachtas*) already decided to opt-in as a full-fledged member of Eurojust in June of this year. Ireland and the UK were required to opt-in to the Eurojust Regulation in view of the special protocol of both countries in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The decision to opt-in builds on the existing cooperation and exchange of information in judicial matters and the strong rise in the number of Irish cases registered at Eurojust. Ireland also participated for the first time in a Eurojust-funded joint investigation team (JIT) last month.

Eurojust's President, Mr Ladislav Hamran, said: *'We are very pleased that the excellent cooperation with Ireland will continue after 12 December, when we will officially become an EU Agency. Eurojust helps the judiciary to cooperate in a practical way and Ireland's participation as an integral partner is of enormous importance in our joint efforts to combat cross-border crime.'*

Ireland's Minister for Justice and Equality, Mr Charles Flanagan, stated: *'Ireland has been a committed member and supporter of Eurojust since its foundation. Opting into the new Eurojust Regulation was a matter of priority for Ireland. Ireland believes the new Regulation offers a modern framework for Eurojust to perform its role effectively and efficiently and looks forward to the Regulation coming into application on 12 December next.'*

The National Member for Ireland at Eurojust, Mr Frank Cassidy, pointed out: *'While a more open European Union brings many advantages, it creates significant challenges in addressing cross-border crime. The ability to continue to cooperate within Eurojust, and avail itself of the range of facilities available, is of invaluable importance for Ireland and will enable us to tackle crime in the most efficient way.'*


Based on Protocol 21 on the position of the UK and Ireland within the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, annexed to the Treaty on the European Union, both countries were required to opt-in to the new Eurojust Regulation, which is established as an official EU Agency as of 12 December of this year. The UK and Ireland decided to opt-in, respectively, in March and June. The participation of Ireland was confirmed by the European Commission on 29 November 2019.

The opt-in and international judicial cooperation with the future Agency were discussed at a seminar in Dublin on 21 November, organised by Eurojust, with the support of Claire Loftus, the Irish Director of Public Prosecutions,

Marion Walsh of the Irish Department of Justice and Equality, and Assistant Commissioner Michael O'Sullivan of the national police force, An Garda Síochána. The seminar focused on the practical aspects of International cooperation in criminal law and included a delegation from the FBI. Vice-President Mr Klaus Meyer-Cabri, National Member for Ireland Mr Frank Cassidy and National Member for Portugal Mr António Cluny participated on behalf of Eurojust.

Over the last five years, the number of Irish cases registered at Eurojust has increased by 41 per cent, with 78 new cases last year. They involve a range of crime types, with the number of cases opened by Ireland being roughly the same number as the number of cases for which other Member States ask for Irish support.

Recently, Ireland for the first time participated in a Eurojust-funded JIT, together with the UK. The agreement on this JIT was signed on 8 November, with a coordination meeting taking place in Dublin. Ireland is the last EU Member State to sign up to a [JIT](#).

 Eurojust's Vice-President *Klaus Meyer-Cabri* addressing a seminar in Ireland on 21 November 2019, with the National Member for Ireland *Frank Cassidy* (right). Photo © Irish Ministry of Justice and Equality.