

**Mrs Julia Viedma
Assistant Director for Europe
Interpol General Secretariat**

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Secretary General of Interpol, Mr Ronald K Noble, who is not available to be here because of other previous commitments, I thank the Director of the SECI Center for his invitation to participate in this meeting on the occasion of the 5th Anniversary of the Signing Day of the SECI agreement. I join with others in also thanking the government of Romania for hosting the conference so effectively.

At the outset I wish to acknowledge that a legal and judicial framework is a crucial aspect of any international or regional response to both transnational terrorism and organised crime. Conferences and discussions such as this provide an important ingredient in determining the form and makeup of international conventions and treaties, and therefore ultimately, national legislation. International law enforcement cooperation and information exchange on crime and criminals is equally vital.

All of the countries present here today are members of the Interpol organisation. You all contribute to its budget and its information collection and sharing. You all participate in Interpol's police cooperation arrangements. During the last three years, Interpol has focused its work in providing police operational support to member countries, according with the three core activities areas considered by the Organization, such as

1. A secure global police communication system
2. Databases of critical police information
3. Operational police support services

We are connecting a worldwide encrypted and secure communications network to all of our 181 Interpol member countries. This new network, called 1-24/7, is based on Internet technology and it has been already implemented in all the European countries. It will enable secure real-time exchange of police information, intelligence and alerts. The capacity to exchange photos, sound, fingerprints and even DNA or other biometric profiles immediately will be integral to this new system. This system could be, and in my opinion should be, at your first line of defence as nations. But all these investments will only pay off should all your countries be both in the legal position, and have the will to share law enforcement information with trust and security. We will provide the security framework that will ensure the trust and therefore the will.

The creation of specialized data bases is crucial, through applying the most effective personal identification systems, particularly for international travel, you would help to create a cornerstone in law enforcement arrangements that directly prevent criminal acts. On your behalf we invest heavily in the development of tamper-proof identity documents, and identity techniques generally, including significant projects on DNA and biometrics, such as the Stolen travel documents data base, Stolen Motor Vehicles database, our Anti-child pornography database or the DNA data base project.

We are convinced that Interpol's role in the exchange of information goes beyond being a mere platform for exchange of data, as one of the essential roles of the Organization is to add value to the information received and provide investigative leads for member states to act upon. Consequently, the exploitation and analysis of data entered into Interpol's databases have been significantly strengthened in order to maximize operational relevance of the information contained in Interpol's systems. The police operational support has been reinforced with the implementation of a 24 hours a day/7 days a week Command and Coordination Centre, which is fully operational from 1st January 2004 to support the needs of our National Central Bureaus in Interpol's four official languages. In addition to that, we have created a new Security Alert, which we call our Orange Notice, to warn Interpol member countries about criminal threats. Interpol also offers its assistance to national law enforcement agencies immediately following any criminal incident. Incident Response Teams are sent to terrorist attacks sites or to countries requiring any form of urgent assistance.

You may be aware that Interpol has a robust counter-crime program, under which a number of key multinational and multidisciplinary police projects around the world are managed. 5 criminal areas have been identified as priorities because of their global impact on society: Public Safety and Terrorism, Trafficking in Human Beings and Child Pornography over the Internet, Drugs and Criminal Organizations, Financial and High Technology Crime, and Fugitive Investigative Support.

But Interpol is not alone in the field of international law enforcement cooperation, though it may well have been the first. Interpol works together today with a range of international and regional organizations throughout the world. Interpol's work with these organizations is very varied. Interpol is working very closely with other European regional organizations such as Europol, the Baltic Sea Task Force, United Nation Mission in Kosovo, European Union Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Stability Pact and, of course, SECL

Multilateralism of course brings advantages and disadvantages and it is important to learn from each other and from our different perspectives on a problem. However we must ensure that in the final analysis we work together in a coordinated and cooperative fashion, combining our strengths and abilities rather than our weakness and inadequacies. We must show the will and the leadership to avoid rivalries, duplications of effort and wasted resources- only the criminal will benefit if this happens.

And this is the way as the cooperation between SECI and Interpol is running out. In addition to and as an extension of the Cooperation agreement already signed in February 2002, both organizations will sign in the following days a new cooperation agreement which enables SECI Liaison Officers to exchange information with Interpol's General Secretariat and with the concerned Interpol National Central Bureau through the 1-24/7 network, once authorized by the above NCB. This agreement is concluded on an interim basis until the conclusion of a cooperation agreement regulating the direct exchange of information between the SECI Center and Interpol.

Our principal reason for intervening here today is simply to urge you to not forget the international police cooperation arrangements that already exist through Interpol. Our presence here commits ourselves to working together in order to help keep the world safer from terrorism and all other forms of serious international crime.

Interpol, in partnership with national police agencies and international organizations, provides a global context to investigation and intelligence, with the objective of practical, concrete police results against terrorists and transnational crime.

Thank you for this opportunity Mr. Chairman and thank you distinguished delegates for listening to me.