

HOUSE OF LORDS  
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN BEFORE  
THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION  
(SUB-COMMITTEE F)  
UKRep, 10 avenue d'Auderghem, Brussels

**INQUIRY INTO EUROPOL**

WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

MR ROBERT CREPINKO and MR ALFREDO NUNZI

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 292 – 342

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WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

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Present

Garden of Frogmal, B.  
Jopling, L. (Chairman)  
Marlesford, L.  
Mawson, L.  
Young of Norwood Green, L.

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Witnesses: **Mr Robert Crepinko**, Chairman, and **Mr Alfredo Nunzi**, Secretary, Europol Management Board, examined.

**Q292 Chairman:** Mr Crepinko, thank you so much for coming here. As you may know, this is a Sub-Committee of the principal European Union Committee of the House of Lords in the British Parliament. We cover most issues which are the responsibility of what we call the Home Office in London and we are conducting this inquiry on Europol which we began a few weeks ago. It is our intention to complete our inquiries by the end of July and then put a report together in the autumn after the parliamentary recess is over and to publish that report at the end of the year. We shall, of course, send you a copy of it when we produce it, although you will no longer be in the Chair of the Management Board. You realise you are on the record. I wonder if you would be kind enough to begin by just telling us something about your own background because I think it would help us in knowing what your connections have been over previous years with the issues which are concerning us.

**Mr Crepinko:** My Lord Chairman, thank you for the invitation. It is a great honour to be here. Before I begin I would like to ask you if it is okay with you for the Secretary of the Management Board, Mr Alfredo Nunzi, to accompany me. The reason I decided to invite him is that he might be a help if we come to very technical questions, if you will allow that. I rely sometimes upon his help.

**Q293 Chairman:** His contributions will be most welcome to the Committee, no problem at all.

**Mr Crepinko:** I hope that my English will be good enough because when I was preparing for this hearing Mr Nunzi asked me if I needed an interpreter and I said I would not need one. I hope that you will not need one to understand me.

**Q294 Chairman:** You are doing very well.

**Mr Crepinko:** Thank you. For the Slovenian Presidency I am the Chairman of the Management Board and when I take my Chairman hat off I am the Deputy Director of Criminal Police in the Republic of Slovenia, so my in my day-to-day work I am responsible for the operative work of criminal police in the Republic of Slovenia. That means all domestic criminal cases and also international co-operation. I have not been doing this job very long. I started in November last year. Before that I was head of the Special Operations Division, meaning for covert operations, surveillance and stuff like that for the whole of Slovenia.

**Q295 Chairman:** Is that what we call Special Branch in the UK?

**Mr Crepinko:** Yes, but within the criminal police. Before that I used to work in the drug field. I was a criminal inspector at the national level responsible for drug cases, mainly international drug cases. Before that I worked in the Regional Police Directorate as a criminal police officer in the field of organised crime, prostitution, trafficking of human beings, also smuggling of very high value goods, and before that I worked for three years in another police directorate in Celje in juvenile delinquency. Although I am rather young I started my police career when I was 14 when I went to the police school. At that time in Slovenia we had so-called cadet police courses so I went when I was 14 to this police high school and then at 18 I started as a police officer in a small police station in Krško.

**Q296 Chairman:** You began by saying you were honoured to come to meet us. I have to say, listening to that, that we are very honoured to meet you.

*Mr Crepinko:* Thank you.

**Q297 Chairman:** Perhaps I could begin. How would you describe the quality of the communication between the police operational level in Member States and the policy makers in the Council?

*Mr Crepinko:* In the Council or -----

**Q298 Chairman:** In the Council of Ministers.

*Mr Crepinko:* This is an interesting question, not very related to the role of the Management Board.

**Q299 Chairman:** But if I am right the Management Board comes between Europol on the one hand and the Commission and the Council on the other.

*Mr Crepinko:* It is a very interesting point of view. I never thought of the Management Board in that way. You could maybe say it is in between but I do not see it as something in between the policy-making in Brussels and the operative field back home. Maybe when giving this evidence I will switch hats from Deputy Director in Slovenia to the Chairman to make it more colourful. I see the Management Board as a managing body of Europol, not so much as a bridge to Brussels. Okay, there are some actions that have to be taken from the Management Board to the Council to get approval, but, as I said, I see the Management Board more Hague-based, if I can simplify it like that, rather than as a bridge to Brussels. It is an interesting interaction between the operative field in the Member States and the Management Board and then to Europol. That is a really interesting situation.

**Q300 Lord Mawson:** We learned that the European Criminal Intelligence Model builds upon the UK intelligence-led policing approach. Is intelligence-led policing a concept that is welcomed in most Member States?

**Mr Crepinko:** I am aware that the Organised Crime Threat Assessment that is being conducted in Europol has its origins in the UK Intelligence Model. I see what I have experienced in the Management Board but also back home – this is now me switching hats – it is a very well appreciated model. It has been accepted by the Member States. Although it had all new approaches it had a period of very hard work to get it through, but I think for the time being it is a very well acknowledged system and this is one of the reasons the Slovenian Presidency put as one of its priorities to introduce such a model in the Western Balkans. I do not know if you are aware but there is an initiative to introduce a so-called SEEOCTA, a South Eastern European OCTA, so new states can learn from good experiences in the EU in this field and find a better way forward in intelligence-led policing.

**Q301 Baroness Garden of Frognal:** The new Europol Council Decision introduces an 18-month tenure as Chairman of the Management Board. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this length of office?

**Mr Crepinko:** Thank you for the question. It is very interesting because it comes now when my period of the chairmanship is almost over. As you are all aware, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia were the first three-year Presidency, so we decided almost 18 months ago to try something similar with this 18 month chairmanship of the Management Board in the future. Always after six months the Chairman of the Management Board changes. The main needs of criminal policing in Europe are known so there are not big changes, but nevertheless the person changes and the personal handling of the issues changes every six months, so I see advantage in an 18-month period for a more stable way of handling these important issues. Talking about the disadvantages, I can only say from my personal, if you like egoistic point of

view that out of what would have been three Chairmen two of them will not have the possibility of enjoying the pleasure of being the Chairman. I do not see any other disadvantages.

**Q302 Baroness Garden of Frognal:** Would there be different ways in which you would have worked if you had had a longer tenure of office?

**Mr Crepinko:** I would not say it would be different. When people ask me, “Are you happy that it is soon to be over?”, I answer them, “No, I am not”, because you need some period of time to get into the business and if you had some more time maybe you could achieve more because you could prepare. I was preparing very hard for a long time for this job but when you are in the field it is a bit different.

**Q303 Baroness Garden of Frognal:** But will it improve the Management Board to have a longer tenure?

**Mr Crepinko:** I think it will have a positive impact on the Management Board.

**Q304 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** What we hope is that it will give the Management Board more time to focus on strategy and maybe less temptation to, shall we say, deal with the day-to-day running and leave that to the Director.

**Mr Crepinko:** I do not see a big impact in that field because strategy is from my point of view not so related to this changing of chairmanships every six months. I think that already with the establishment of the Management Board there are no big threats to having the temptation to go to day-to-day work. It is not like that.

**Q305 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** It does not happen?

**Mr Crepinko:** It might have happened sometimes but the reason was not because of the legal circumstances in which the Management Board operates. The reason is not that it changes every six months.

**Q306 Chairman:** I wonder if I can go back. Lord Mawson asked you a question a minute ago in which he asked whether you felt intelligence-led policing was a concept that is welcomed in most Member States. When we talked to the Commission this morning we asked them a question about a working paper on criminal intelligence-led law enforcement which was originally planned for 2005 and has been delayed and delayed and delayed, and all they could tell us was that it had not been implemented, although it was a decision taken, because it was – the word they kept using was “premature”. Why do you think that working paper on intelligence-led law enforcement has been delayed? We pressed them very hard to see what reasons there were for Member States to block it, which they clearly have done. What is behind all this because one would have thought that intelligence-led law enforcement was something which most people would welcome?

**Mr Crepinko:** My Lord Chairman, I hope you will not be offended when I say that I would really not like to comment on the decisions made in Brussels, or was it by one of the European agencies or the Member States? I can only now go back to my own country, to Slovenia. We think it is a very good approach and we are struggling very hard to introduce it. Because our development is rather short in this field in comparison with some other Member States I can only say – but it is real speculation – that you are talking about 27 Member States. Maybe there are different cultural, social environments or maybe it is simply the way states handle their day-to-day criminal police work. Maybe that is the reason that some Member States are taking more time to come to the conclusion that it is a good thing.

**Q307 Chairman:** I wonder if the Secretary has a comment on that.

*Mr Nunzi:* I do not have a comment on this issue.

**Q308 Chairman:** So you think that just endless delay is acceptable?

*Mr Crepinko:* As I said at the beginning, the Brussels machinery works in its own physics, so from my position of Chairman of the Management Board I cannot comment on the reasons for the delays if there are any.

**Q309 Baroness Garden of Frognal:** If we can refer back to the Management Board, do you expect that the demands on the Secretariat at the Management Board will increase under the new arrangements? Will the workload increase?

*Mr Crepinko:* I think it will. I can say for the time being that the workload on the Management Board Secretariat is already very high, but I think under the new regulation the workload will get even higher.

**Q310 Baroness Garden of Frognal:** Are there any particular areas where you think it will be more demanding?

*Mr Crepinko:* I could hardly comment on that.

**Q311 Lord Marlesford:** Can I go back before I ask the next question on the agenda to something which Lord Jopling asked earlier on, which was your opinion on the intelligence-led policing for Europol, and expand that question a little bit? One of the conclusions that came to me yesterday, having spent the day with Europol, was that the importance of fighting terrorism, which is obviously considerable, is very much based on the police experience of Europol and I wonder whether there is a case to be made to say that there should be more direct input for the purpose of fighting terrorism into Europol from the various intelligence agencies, the non-police intelligence agencies. In our case it would probably be the Security Service MI5, and other countries have their own. At the moment it is all based on police

intelligence and the police network, whereas, of course, in the case of the United Kingdom, the Security Service's main task now is trying to protect us primarily from Islamist terrorism. Do you think there is a case for having a more direct input into Europol from the intelligence services?

**Mr Crepinko:** As you are aware in the current organisation of Europol, the Europol national unit, already it is possible to settle these things at the national level. It is one of the discussions we often have also in the Management Board. Maybe sometimes there is no need to change anything at the top, but – and I told this also to the Member States as the Chairman – there are a lot of things we can do back home and we need to do back home. There are no hindrances back home to adding information to improve the data quality in the information system of Europol. From my personal feeling I do not see a real need for the time being to change the concept of Europol, but I know in some Member States there are really big discussions on how to improve that at the national level.

**Q312 Lord Marlesford:** Is the size of the Management Board, 27 people, an obstacle to good governance and what do you anticipate the role of the Commission will be on the Board when the Commission becomes a full member?

**Mr Crepinko:** Being a member of, if I may say so, one of the new Member States, I can only say that a bigger number of countries represented in the Management Board is not a hindrance but vice versa: it is an added value, because when we talk about what are the hindrances to intelligence-led policing my answer to that question is that more countries, more views, more experiences can only add to the common goal. Okay, it is perhaps a bigger challenge to chair 27 Member States than a lower number but I think it is a good thing; I do not think it is bad. Also, while the European Commission has only observer status in the Management Board there are already some very good inputs from their side, so they are already a very active

player in the Management Board although technically they only have observer status. I do not see any big changes in that.

**Q313 Lord Marlesford:** So it will not make a lot of difference?

*Mr Crepinko:* I do not think so.

**Q314 Lord Mawson:** What in your opinion makes for an effective organisation? What conditions do you have to have in order to have an effective organisation?

*Mr Crepinko:* It is a very good question. When I was preparing for this hearing I was – “afraid” is too strong a word. My English is on a certain level but not only my English. When we are talking about languages, the Slovenian language has a small amount of words for some things, if I may say so, and English has a much bigger amount, and I was afraid that we would get into some fields where in my translation to English from Slovenian we have one word and you have a lot of them, so I would like to apologise for not answering this because I do not know how to describe it in English. I can only put my Slovenian hat on and say that an effective organisation is an organisation that completes its tasks at a very good level.

**Lord Mawson:** Yes, but what needs to be happening within an organisation? What conditions do you have to have within an organisation to make sure that is happening? I think your English is very good, by the way.

**Q315 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** It is better than our Slovenian!

*Mr Crepinko:* I have a lack of words to describe it, so I can only go to the basic answer. It is an organisation where the goals are settled, the strategies to achieve those goals are settled and all the players are known and the players are doing their job in going through this strategy to these goals. This is how I can explain my opinion of an effective organisation.

**Q316 Chairman:** I am sure you are familiar with the old saying that the best committee is a committee of one. Clearly a committee of 27 brings with it difficulties. I ought perhaps to know the answer to this question, but I do not. Who initiates new propositions within the Management Board? Is it the Secretariat, is it the Presidency, or do your initiatives come from the membership, from “in the hall”, as we say?

**Mr Crepinko:** This is the thing that makes life in the Management Board so interesting, because the initiatives come either from the Chairman -----

**Q317 Chairman:** Or from Europol itself, of course.

**Mr Crepinko:** Yes. There are various ways in which they come in life. It can be the Presidency, it can be Europol, it can be a group of Member States. It can be one Member State by itself, so there are different ways in which initiatives come to life and that makes it very interesting.

**Q318 Chairman:** And if it is a proposal to change the way in which Europol operates does it have to have unanimous approval or does it operate on the QMV principle?

**Mr Crepinko:** It differs from the question we are talking about. Everything is settled. It is either the Convention or there are implementing rules they set up. There are different quotas that need to be fulfilled for different questions. Sometimes it is unanimous, sometimes it is a simple majority, the qualified majority. It differs from question to question.

**Q319 Chairman:** I think it would be helpful if we could have a note. I do not think we have had a note, but I am told it is in the Decision. Can you tell us how often in your period as Chairman a proposal has failed because there were only one or two Member States who were against it and blocked it?

**Mr Crepinko:** I can remember only one such case when we were talking about establishing the police co-operation in Kosovo. There was a proposal to establish police co-operation at the operative level and the Management Board decided not to do so upon the opinion of some Member States.

**Q320 Chairman:** How many?

**Mr Crepinko:** I do not know that; I am sorry.

**Q321 Chairman:** Was it one or two or something like that?

**Mr Crepinko:** I do not remember. It was enough that the proposal did not go through. I do not remember, I am sorry.

**Q322 Lord Marlesford:** I want to ask again about the Management Board and the performance of Europol. Perhaps I could start by asking to what extent does the Management Board guide or lay down the priorities for Europol because it was explained to us about the Analysis Work Files, of which I think there are now 18, and the decision to set up such programmes obviously was a very important decision. Is that the sort of decision that would be made with a proposal from Europol to your Board or could your Board make a suggestion to Europol that they should set it up? What is the guidance relationship between you and Europol?

**Mr Crepinko:** When you are talking about guidance of priorities the Management Board is the organ giving the priorities to Europol, and when you are talking about Analysis Work Files it can go, as we said in the previous question, both ways. It can be either proposed by Europol because of the needs they have discovered when doing maybe other Analysis Work Files or it can come from one or more Member States that feel this is one area that should be dealt with in this way.

**Q323 Lord Marlesford:** So on the whole – and it is difficult for you to answer – how satisfactory do you find the performance of Europol in general?

**Mr Crepinko:** Again my answer will be with both hats. As the Deputy Director in Slovenia I am very satisfied with the services we are getting as the Slovenian criminal police from Europol. When I am talking as the Chairman of the Management Board I can say that I am satisfied. Otherwise I would be obliged to take some action during my chairmanship to improve that.

**Q324 Lord Marlesford:** In a sense you could ask the question do you need the Board or could Europol function perfectly well on its own, but presumably there are two things. One is that you would, as you said, set priorities and you would do that from your Member States' input, but, of course, they do also have the Member State inputs direct to Europol from the liaison offices. Is that a useful duplication?

**Mr Crepinko:** Yes, I think it is because through the liaison bureaux there is the operative input, the police input, and from the Management Board there is the policy-making strategic input, so this does not overlap in my opinion. As I said before, it is very valuable to have these boards to build these strategies.

**Q325 Lord Marlesford:** Supposing a nation decides that Europol should be switching some priorities or doing something about an important problem. Would they normally communicate that direct to Europol? Would they communicate it, say, in the case of Slovenia, through you, or would it come from Coreper at a political level?

**Mr Crepinko:** Again, you are talking about 27 Member States, so it varies a lot between the Member States. There are different ways in which Member States tackle the issues.

**Q326 Chairman:** You answered Lord Marlesford a few moments ago by saying that during your period as Chairman of the Management Board you have not made any initiatives in order to improve the working of Europol. Does that mean to say that during this six months, which is almost over now, you could find nothing at all to criticise in the workings of Europol and that you have taken no steps to try to change things for the better? That sounded as though it was the implication of what you said.

**Mr Crepinko:** My Lord Chairman, I hope I was not misunderstood. I did not want to say that I did not do anything to improve the work of Europol in this period. The initiatives of the Presidency have been reflected in the Work Programme, in the budget, in several documents. I just said that I cannot say that I am critically dissatisfied with Europol's work because otherwise I would have to take some action. I have personally done a lot of things along the way on how to improve Europol's working, and not only as the Presidency, of course. All 27 Member States at each meeting try through these different mechanisms to improve the work of Europol because when we go back home it is our main interest that Europol is strong and that it functions well.

**Q327 Chairman:** Could you tell us what was the Management Board strategy during the drafting of the Council Decision?

**Mr Crepinko:** The Europol Management Board was not involved in the preparation work for the draft Council Decision. The involvement of the Management Board started officially, if I am not mistaken, at the March meeting when we established the ad hoc committee to prepare all implementing rules necessary for the draft Council Decision or for the Council Decision then to come into power. Because the draft Council Decision was prepared here in Brussels in the Europol working party, it was their responsibility to prepare the document.

**Q328 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** Mr Crepinko, you are obviously a Chairman who sees the Europol glass half full rather than half empty. I say that genuinely, not in criticism. This is a bit of a complicated question so I will try and put it carefully. The new Council Decision on Europol puts responsibility on the heads of Europol national units to discuss proposals that will improve Europol's operational effectiveness, encourage commitment from Member States and evaluate the reports and analyses drafted by Europol. Is this a move of operational responsibility away from the Management Board onto the heads of Europol national units?

*Mr Crepinko:* If you will allow me I would just like to add to your remark. Not only as Chairman and not only in regard to Europol, I am a glass half full person and it helps in difficult situations.

**Q329 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** I agree.

*Mr Crepinko:* I do not see it as a switchover from this responsibility to the heads of Europol national units because already it is their responsibility to make sure the operative field is covered, so I just think – and this is my personal opinion – that it states more clearly -----

**Q330 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** What is already happening?

*Mr Crepinko:* Yes.

**Q331 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** On information systems, under the Council Decision Europol can establish other systems for the processing of personal data besides the Analysis Work Files/Index System and the Europol Information System (EIS). Have you any plans to develop these new databases?

*Mr Crepinko:* I can say only that Europol is the whole time developing new systems that could be more effective, a better tool, a better help for its users, and I think that can only be

welcomed if there is a need for new systems to be introduced. In the Management Board life is very dynamic because a lot of initiatives are raised. Some of them are buried, some of them go further, and there are already at this stage initiatives on new information systems.

**Q332 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** Just developing that slightly, – and we discussed this with another witness; we talked about the fact that it is not so much how much information you get but the quality of information – are you able to encourage that approach, that sometimes less is more? It is as much about quality as about quantity?

**Mr Crepinko:** This is a very important issue and it has been already brought up to the table of the Management Board meetings on several occasions. It has become a regular issue at every meeting because awareness of the importance of it is very high. At the Management Board level we can encourage Member States to go in this direction, to improve the quality, and also the quantity, of their information into the system, but this is again one of the situations where I have to be honest: it is also our responsibility when we go back home to ensure that this happens in our police forces, not only at some meeting level.

**Q333 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** Can you give us an appreciation of the work of the Security Committee and indicate the main sources of difficulty from a Europol security point of view?

**Mr Crepinko:** I am sorry; I did not understand the question.

**Q334 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** You are not familiar with the work of the Security Committee?

**Mr Crepinko:** I am, yes.

**Q335 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** Can you give us some description of its work? How big an issue is security from a security of information point of view, from a Europol point of view?

*Mr Crepinko:* I will give you an example to answer this question. I am not well oriented in time because everything happens so fast these days, but Europol had needed for several months to get security accreditation for its information system that was then given by the Management Board in March, so it shows that already all the modern systems have been introduced. The level of security needed for such an organisation as Europol is so high that it needed several months and several meetings for improvements before it got the clearance for it to be used, so it is a very important issue for this organisation.

**Q336 Lord Young of Norwood Green:** And you think we have reached the right level now, do you?

*Mr Crepinko:* I might answer this very simply. We will never reach that level.

**Q337 Chairman:** Perhaps I can ask you a question which I asked yesterday in Europol with regard to the security of information and the extent to which information leaks. If you had to grade it between one and ten, ten being the fact that you could not sleep at night because you were so worried that nothing was sacred and everything leaked and everybody knew exactly what you were doing, and one being absolutely perfect, which you have just said is virtually impossible and I accept that, where would you put the protection of sensitive information in Europol between one and ten?

*Mr Crepinko:* From the position of the Chairman I can surely not give that mark, so I will again switch to my Slovenian hat. I can say that it is very high. From my experience with our Europol national unit, when I go back into the days when I was working in the drug field and we wanted to either give or get some information from the system, it was very well structured.

The security measures that, for instance, Italy put into the system will not lose their way. It was very high, so it is numerically not able to make a grade but I would certainly say it is very high.

**Q338 Lord Marlesford:** We were told that there were difficulties, for example, in the personnel positive vetting system, checking that individuals were reliable. We have a system in England which is called positive vetting and we have classifications of “restricted” at the bottom, which merely means that you cannot give it to the press, to “confidential”, to “secret” to “top secret”. We were told by Eurojust that there were real difficulties in some parts of Europol, but again, asking you with your national hat on, do you think your system of positive vetting is rather similar to ours? It is very elaborate in Britain and very tough.

**Mr Crepinko:** We introduced a very similar system in 2002, if I am not mistaken, and it has been a big issue back in Slovenia just to fill in these gaps, just to make sure that it all functions, and it still is a big issue. To go back to the Europol issue, the security of the information is one of the main concerns of Europol, not only in the Member States but also it is one of the biggest things when we are talking about agreements, co-operation or operative or strategic agreements with third states. It is one of the big letters and it is an obstacle a state cannot step over if it is not fulfilled 100 per cent. I think it is being paid a lot of attention and I think it is also necessary that it is like that.

**Q339 Lord Marlesford:** My earlier suggestion was that it might be useful if the intelligence agencies of the 27 nations had a more direct input. From their point of view I can see they would probably be more worried than the police about this particular aspect and it could be a barrier.

**Mr Crepinko:** By the information I have also had when there have been checks with other European agencies to see if these systems match each other, if confidential is confidential, if

the documents are handled the same way, I can tell from the discussions I have heard or read that Europol's standards are very high.

**Q340 Lord Mawson:** How would you describe the relationship between the Management Board and the Police Chiefs Task Force?

*Mr Crepinko:* It is a very interesting relationship. Because the members of the Management Board are very high ranking police officers or officials in the Member States there is an overlap and some of them are also members of the Police Chiefs Task Force, and I remember that at the last meeting we had a discussion on a matter that was being handled in the Police Chiefs Task Force. I think that in the future, and it was also the result of this discussion, these two should be connected better because when the Police Chiefs Task Force was established that was the aim, and now both are developed we see that there are overlaps and we have to make sure that in the future there is a better exchange of things, that there is not duplication of work being done in either Analysis Work Files or the COSPOL projects. It is an area that will certainly be very interesting in the future.

**Q341 Lord Mawson:** How is the work of Europol co-ordinated with the work of Eurojust? The 2009 Work Programme sets the minimum frequency of the Europol/Eurojust steering committee meetings at three months. Is this sufficient?

*Mr Crepinko:* I think it is the same thing that we discussed before about the amount or the quality of the information put into the system. I do not see a problem that these meetings are not often enough. I think it comes down to the quality of the co-operation between the two of them, but I can only say what I hear from the oral reports from the Director at every Management Board meeting and his views on this co-operation were very positive and none of the Member States objected to those statements. I can only assume that it means that the co-operation is good.

**Q342 Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming and thank you for giving us your impressions. I think we can understand the problems that the Chairman of the Management Board has in having a very short term of office, in being able, particularly having other responsibilities as you clearly do, to get around all the problems of Europol. We are very grateful to you for coming, thank you, and carry on the good work.

**Mr Crepinko:** Thank you for having me here.