

Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Judicial Cooperation

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News

On 17 May 2021, Eurojust published a [report](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on judicial cooperation in criminal matters. It was based on 128 concrete requests sent to Eurojust between April and June 2020 – when lockdowns in many countries created sudden and unexpected practical problems. The report looks at the following issues:

- The European Arrest Warrant (EAW) and extradition in relation to COVID-19;
- The impact of COVID-19 on the exchange of evidence and other investigative measures;
- COVID-19 as a criminal opportunity and corresponding asset recovery measures;
- The role of Eurojust in combating COVID-19-related crimes.

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According to the report, the EAW mechanisms remained functional. However, pandemic measures had a significant effect on the final stage of EAW proceedings, i.e., the physical surrender of the requested person. Involving Eurojust seemed to have facilitated timely responses, which helped move the proceedings forward.

Member States continued to use instruments related to the exchange of evidence and to implement investigative measures. Sometimes requests were only handled in special cases, however, which led to delays in the execution of European Investigation Orders (EIOs) and requests for mutual legal assistance. Eurojust was frequently contacted to support the transmission of such orders and requests.

Understandably, pandemic measures had a strong impact on the work of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), what with travel limitations, postponed action days, and delayed negotiations on new JITs. Eurojust quickly reacted to the situation, amending its JITs funding programme and providing JIT members with a secure communication platform on which to hold their meetings online.

In conclusion, the report calls for the establishment of reliable transmission and communication channels that practitioners can use in situations in which standard postal services are unavailable or unreliable. Hence, the report suggests establishing a single electronic platform for the exchange of the most frequently applied instruments of judicial cooperation, with access for Eurojust.

For a detailed summary of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on judicial cooperation and on Eurojust's role in these challenging times, see the [contribution by Ernest and Radu](#).

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