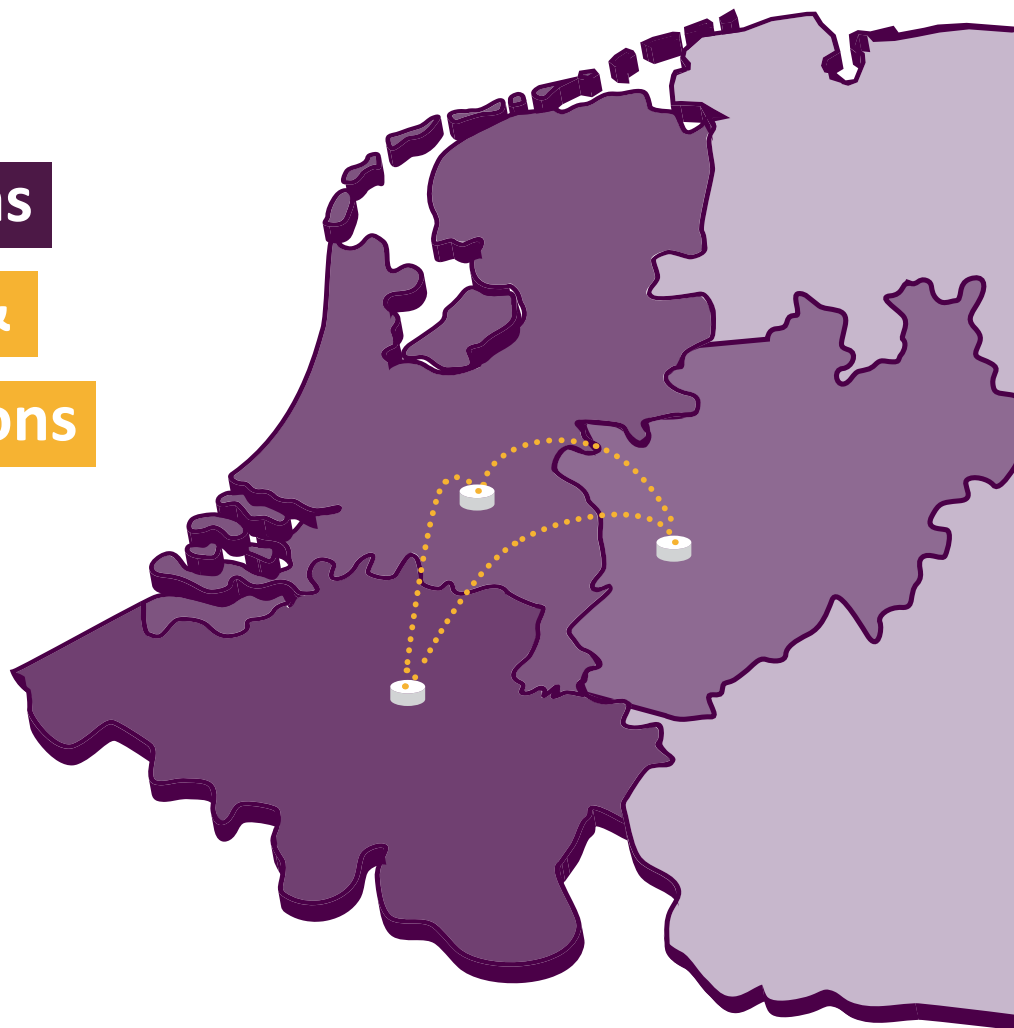


**International
expert platforms**

**Best practices &
recommendations**



**Introduction 'Best practices and recommendations for international expert platforms'
by the Euregional Information and Expertise Centre (EURIEC)**

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the cross-border administrative approach to organized crime. This leads to the need for administrative authorities in various countries to meet. Meetings with the purpose of discussing cases and exploring opportunities for cooperation. At such international meetings, organisations/persons gather from different (meeting) cultures with different powers, processes and procedures. These differences need to be taken into account to achieve a successful expert platform.

Based on the experiences of the EURIEC, this document has been compiled as a guide to present the Do's and Don'ts in organising international expert platforms. A tool for those considering organising such a meeting.





Do's general introduction

- 1 One person will have to take the initiative and assume a neutral role.
- 2 The neutral person inquires from the counterpart abroad whether they are also interested in getting acquainted.
- 3 If there is interest: the neutral person asks both countries what themes they would like to discuss, what problems are visible and what the international components of this theme are. Common themes are put on the agenda. For each country, you can leave room for one or two themes that are not common.
- 4 Keep in mind that it is not obvious that the same procedures or powers apply in the other country. Therefore, start the explanation relatively low-key so that the similarities and differences become clear.
- 5 All participants should be given sufficient opportunity to express their views and indicate their expectations for the meeting.
- 6 Try to come to concrete agreements:
 - ▶ Is there a theme we want to explore further at a future meeting?
 - ▶ How do we keep in touch? For example: meet once a year around a theme? Or once a year discuss the state of affairs and developments on both sides of the border? Or more often?
 - ▶ Try to have one contact person per country and per organisation who can contact each other directly with questions.



Tips

- ▶ Pay attention to reciprocity. Another country is not only interesting to get information from, but also to provide information to. Only together do we make a fist against organised crime.
- ▶ Open mind: THE administrative approach does not exist. Some powers do not exist in another country or are not vested in an administration, but there will also be powers that exist abroad but not in your home country. Be open to the possibilities.

"You have to have the organisational ways to meet across borders, get to know each other and understand each other. This is basic, but important. After all, it's easier to talk when you see each other more often."

- Rob Hutschemaekers, head EURIEC

Do's specific case

- 1 Find a contact at a similar organisation abroad. Even if it takes effort: find the authority specifically dealing with the case.
- 2 Ask which other organisations are involved in the issues raised by the case. Invite them to the meetings. Give authorities the opportunity to bring in other authorities, e.g. police. The same authorities on both sides should be invited. Limit to about three organisations per country.
- 3 Agree on the language used during the expert platform in advance so that barriers are removed. Send a list of participants / problem outline / agenda in advance. This can also be sent in two languages.
- 4 It is better to have the meeting take place physically, if practical.
- 5 Trust and personal relationships can be very useful in international expert platforms. Therefore, make time for e.g. a short coffee break so that people can also get to know each other informally. In addition, make concrete agreements on confidentiality and sharing information during the meeting.
- 6 Per country, discuss the approach to the kind of case that is being discussed. In the case of a licensing case, consider questions such as:
 - How does licensing proceed?
 - Who decides to revoke or suspend a licence? Under what conditions can they do so?
 - To whom can information be provided (purely national, i.e. not yet international)?
 - Who can pick up signals of abuses? What is done with these signals?
- 7 Keep in mind that it is not obvious that the same procedures or powers apply in the other country. Therefore, start the explanation relatively low-key so that the similarities and differences become clear.
- 8 Finally, it should be clear who needs what data from whom and who can send what data to whom. See what information would be interesting to exchange in the specific case so that it can then be legally figured out what is and is not possible. EURIEC can provide support in this.
- 9 After the meeting, make a short action list and/or concise summary of the meeting and send this to all participants (possibly in two languages). Agree who regularly asks about the state of play.
- 10 In countries where there is no EURIEC, examine the national and international regulations for each type of information. To divide the workload, it can be decided that each partner, for its own information, legally investigates what the possibilities and bottlenecks are to share information (internationally) and with which foreign organisations this organisation can exchange information. The result should be communicated to all parties involved.
- 11 If during this legal research it appears that there are certain challenges in terms of international information sharing, try to get in touch with the legislator to signal the lack of possibilities in terms of information sharing.

It should be clear who needs what data from whom and who can send what data to whom.





Don'ts

- ▶ Starting the meeting without a common objective and/or agenda.
- ▶ Starting the meeting without preparation. It is important that a neutral person already has an idea of where the common 'wins' are.
- ▶ Having the goal that your approach should be adopted by other countries. Every country has its individual setup and this should be respected. Do not demand action from the foreign partner.
- ▶ 'Just' sharing personal information and using it in dealing with the case. Information should not be shared just like that. Ask the EURIEC for advice here.



More information?

Need support in organising an expert platform or want to know more about the (cross-border) administrative approach? Find all EURIEC handbooks and recommendations at www.euriec.eu or contact us at euriec@rieclimburg.nl.