

Russian war crimes in Ukraine: Reinforced mandate for Eurojust

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The EU agreed to broaden the competences of Eurojust – the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation. The Agency will be able to collect and store evidence on war crimes, including videos, audio recordings and satellite images.

What is Eurojust?

Eurojust is an EU Agency supporting national authorities in investigating and prosecuting cross-border crime.

The existing EU rules however did not envisage a situation of this scale and crimes of this extent, requiring an update in Eurojust's legal base.



Situation in Ukraine

Since the start of the Russian invasion, the world has witnessed the atrocities committed in Bucha, Kramatorsk and other Ukrainian cities. The EU has been clear that those responsible for the war crimes in Ukraine must be held accountable. For this, credible and reliable evidence is key.

The Ukrainian prosecution office created a dedicated website (<https://warcrimes.gov.ua/>) asking people to register and document such crimes. So far over 10,000 cases have been opened. A number of EU Member States have opened similar investigations, so did the International Criminal Court (ICC). An EU Joint Investigation Team was set up with Ukraine, supported by Eurojust.

However, due to the ongoing conflict, it is extremely difficult to store and preserve evidence securely in Ukraine. It is also important that such evidence can be shared with national or international authorities.



What does the reinforced mandate for Eurojust include?

Eurojust will be able to collect evidence, including:



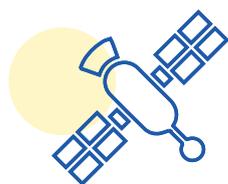
photographs



videos



audio-recordings



satellite images



open-source information

Eurojust will have new competences:

Preserve and store evidence

Situation now

Witnesses and victims record crimes on their mobile phones, such evidence is prone to be destroyed or lost.

Reinforced mandate

Eurojust will be able to preserve and store this evidence centrally, supporting national and international investigations.

Collect and access evidence

Instigative authorities often cannot built cases due limited access to the right piece of evidence.

Eurojust will be able to collect evidence in a coordinated manner and to assess it systematically.

Process data in the evidence

There is a huge volume of digital evidence, such as videos, recordings or satellite images, but Eurojust can process such personal data only on an exceptional basis.

Eurojust will be able to store and process digital data in its automated data management and storage facility (videos, recordings, satellite images).