

## INTERPOL AND ITS ROLE IN EUROPEAN FINGERPRINT TRAINING AND STANDARDS

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**ABSTRACT:** In 1991 Interpol created a European working group on fingerprint standards, to recommend standard documents, equipment and training between European member countries. The 1st International Symposium on Fingerprinting and Fingerprint Standards were placed in 1995. The outcome of this conference was to endorse the work done by the group and to extend the use of the fingerprint and latent forms to the rest of the world. From 1995–1999 Interpol continued to organise working groups, among other things an International AFIS Expert Group to assist Interpol concerning technical issues. In 2000 it was organised the 2nd International Symposium on Fingerprint to know delegates from many of the member countries about the role of various Interpol working groups on training, identification and standards. In 2000 Interpol created four new working groups: Expert Working Group on Standardised Photography Training, European Working Group on Identification II, Expert Working Group on Standardised Scene of Crime Examination Training, The European Standing Monitoring Group on Fingerprint Training.

**KEY WORDS:** Interpol working groups; Fingerprints standards.

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### INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to find an exact date when the fingerprint service was created at Interpol, but it is safe to say that from the outset of the organisation in 1923 fingerprints were acknowledged as a way of identifying persons. There are papers available which indicate that the organisation did have a fingerprint service in the 1940s. You see that Interpol has a long history in fingerprints yet it wasn't until 1990 that Interpol organised an International symposium on fingerprints. This meeting was attended by over

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100 delegates from more than 70 countries. One of the outcomes from that meeting was the recommendation that Interpol create a European working party on fingerprint standards. This group was created in 1991 and was given the following terms of reference:

- to recommend and design a standard fingerprint form for use in transmitting fingerprints between European member states;
- to recommend and design a standard document for use in conjunction with latents (marks) sent between member countries and the General Secretariat of Interpol;
- to explore inks and papers with a view to recommending the best media for fingerprint purposes, with particular reference to using them in conjunction with automated fingerprint recognition technology supplied by current market leaders (e.g. Morpho Systèmes, Printrak and NEC);
- to assess the feasibility of defining standard equipment for copying, transmission and “live scanning” of fingerprints (the equipment must provide copies at 1:1 ratio with the original in terms of quality);
- to explore the differences between European countries relating to fingerprint standards in the specific areas of criteria by which fingerprint practitioners within a police service are accepted as competent to make the final decisions with respect to fingerprint identifications, training methods and quality assurance procedures.

#### EUROPEAN WORKING PARTY ON FINGERPRINT STANDARDS

The standard fingerprint form was deemed to be very important for facilitating police co-operation as it makes it easier to search in different databases if the fingerprint forms are the same. The two most important aspects of the form had to be addressed and these were nominal data and fingerprints. The final version of the form had been designed with specific sizes for the boxes for data items and fingerprints, and also a scale to ensure that the 1:1 ratio could be checked. An accompanying document, on which additional information could be given, had also been created. This form is now used by several countries as their national form and by many others when sending fingerprint requests to Interpol or other countries.

Just as standardisation was important for the transmission of sets of ten prints, it was important for the transmission of latents. The latent transmission form was designed by the General Secretariat’s Fingerprint Department in conjunction with the Working Party. The form was designed to provide all the information needed by identification departments in member states. The main concern of the Working Party had been that the form

should be simple but should provide all essential information. The form was in two parts (two A-4 size sheets), the first page for text and the second for a photograph of the latents and the reply coupon.

Concerning Ink and papers a questionnaire had been sent to the European member countries, containing a few questions on papers and inks and requesting samples of the materials used. The group received 14 different inks and 30 different types of paper to be tested. The Sub-Group had created and constructed its own test equipment to assess the friction properties of inks and their ability to provide standard images and impressions. The equipment tests were conducted on all the inks supplied. The conclusions of the tests were given in the report which was accepted by the 24th European Regional Conference. This work was very beneficial as many countries still use inked fingerprint records for achieving. The results of this study are available from your Interpol office.

The findings of the study on technical equipment used by Interpol's European member countries were as follows. With respect to copying machines, 25% of countries used photographic methods, 60% used photocopying, and 11% used other methods. Only two countries used colour machines. The 1:1 ratio with the original document was maintained. The vast majority of countries were satisfied with their equipment. The Working Party did not feel qualified to set or recommend standards for the electronic transmission of fingerprints and it was therefore recommended to the 24th European Regional Conference that a Technical Working Group were established to conduct research on that subject. By setting standards for the future, countries could influence suppliers. The European Regional Conference had agreed the recommendation. The final aspect of the survey was "live scanning". Only three countries had stated that they used that system. Two of the countries using "live scanning" reported the creation of false minutiae by the system they used, but one of them had no manual backup. The conclusion of the survey was that whilst many countries were interested in that technology, hardly any country was prepared to accept the present state of development. Looking at this final paragraph I believe that it would be interesting to see the results if this same question was asked today?

The group prepared a questionnaire for the member countries which concentrated on the following subjects: recruitment, training, bureau procedures, identification, evidence preparation, performance measurement and monitoring. Even in Europe there were marked differences amongst the member countries fingerprint services, this group proposed that another group be set up to look more specifically at the training of fingerprint officers.

**1995–1999**

In 1995 Interpol hosted the 1st International Symposium on Fingerprinting and Fingerprint Standards. The European working group was presented along with presentations on AFIS and transmission systems. The outcome from this conference was to endorse the work done by the group and to extend the use of the fingerprint and latent forms to the rest of the world.

From 1995–1999 Interpol continued to organise working groups to look at the following subjects: creation of a standard European basic fingerprint course, creation of an electronic format for the fingerprint transmission document and the creation of a standard for presenting crime scene identifications in court. Interpol also created an international AFIS expert group to assist Interpol concerning technical issues.

The European group on basic training designed a 3 week course which is aimed at training a person with no knowledge of fingerprints to be able to start working effectively in a fingerprint bureau. The basis of this course was presented in 2000 to the Interpol European committee who approved the course format.

A group created the Interpol implementation of the ANSI/NIST fingerprint transmission standard, this is known as INT-I and was designed specifically for the sending of fingerprints electronically between member countries. The work of this group is now being updated by the AFIS expert group regularly. The AFIS expert group meets twice a year and more information on the work of this group can be obtained from the Interpol web site [www.interpol.int](http://www.interpol.int).

The identification group had the following guidelines to work from “bearing in mind the methods and procedures for identification of fingerprints in use by Interpol European member countries, the Interpol European Expert Group on Fingerprint Identification is asked to explore the feasibility of determining a common European method for fingerprint identification. This new method will include standard fingerprint identification procedures and an agreed number of minutiae and other characteristics.”

This group met on several occasions and produced a very complete report on the two different approaches to identification that are used in Europe at present. The group was not able to define a common standard but presented a paper which explained all aspects of the two methods fully. The group felt this was as far as they could go and recommended the setting up of a further group to continue this work.

**2000–2002**

In 2000 Interpol hosted the 2nd International Symposium on Fingerprints. Delegates from many of the member countries learnt about the role of

the various Interpol working groups on training, identification and standards. Presentations were also made by the major AFIS vendors.

In 2000 Interpol created four working groups:

1. Expert Working Group on Standardised Photography training (EWGSPT);
2. European Working Group on Identification II;
3. Expert Working Group on Standardised Scene of Crime Examination Training;
4. The European Standing Monitoring Group on Fingerprint Training.

### ***Expert Working Group on Standardised Photography Training (EWGSPT)***

Expert Working Group on Standardised Photography training was created to:

- develop and implement a standardised curriculum for a basic photography training system;
- set standard examinations that must be undertaken by all attending the basic photography training course;
- to accredit European Training Centres by ensuring they meet the required Interpol criteria;
- assess the development of the basic photography training course and implement changes when necessary;
- propose possibilities for funding those countries that need assistance to send students to a European Training Centre.

This group started in 2000 with delegates from the following countries Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. The group has met on 4 occasions and has designed a basic 3 week forensic photography course; they have created a pre course information package that will be sent to candidates. The group issued a questionnaire to member countries which included the content of the course, this was done to inform member countries and also to see if the proposed course met the requirements in all 46 European countries. Countries were also asked if they would attend an International forensic photography conference in 2003, the result of this question was very positive and this will be included as part of the 3rd fingerprint symposium. The group will now prepare its final report and recommendations on how their work should be taken forward by Interpol.

### ***European Working Group on Identification II***

European working group on Identification II was created to “explore, define and establish common terminology concerning the content of the fingerprint identification process and the general application of this process to the detection, validation and comparison of ridge detail, so as to provide a basis

for communication and promote uniformity. To define and establish recognized principles concerning application of this process so that it can be standardized, controlled and made objective. This may cover aspects such as definitions, norms, standards, rules, guidelines and rules of thumb.”

This group started in 2000 under the chairmanship of France, delegates from Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom participate in the groups work. So far this group has met on two occasions and has created a table of common terms used in the identification process. The group is now analysis the identification methods of the countries who participate in the group. The group has found a lot of common ground yet there are some difficult tasks which have to be dealt with. The final report should be available in 2003.

#### ***Expert Working Group on Standardised Scene of Crime Examination Training***

Expert Working Group on Standardised Scene of Crime Examination Training was created to:

- develop and implement a standardised curriculum for a basic scene of crime examination training system;
- set standard examinations that must be undertaken by all attending the basic scene of crime training course;
- accredit European Training Centres by ensuring they meet the required Interpol criteria;
- assess the development of the basic scene of crime examination training course and implement changes when necessary;
- propose possibilities for funding those countries that need assistance to send students to a European Training Centre.

This group has met on several occasions under the chairmanship of the United Kingdom. The following countries participate in the meetings Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Norway and Portugal. The aim of this group was to create a basic course which would train a person to a standard that would allow them to examine a volume crime such as car theft. The group has encountered several problems firstly the lack of support from certain delegations and secondly that other European groups are preparing similar courses. At present this group has been put on hold as there does not seem to be a demand for such a course.

#### ***The European Standing Monitoring Group on Fingerprint Training***

The European Standing Monitoring Group on Fingerprint Training was created to “set and monitor the marking of examination papers as well as monitoring the accredited Fingerprint Training Centres. The Working

Group membership should change every two years and the frequency of meetings will be twice a year.”

This group started in 2000 and was set up to monitor the Interpol basic fingerprint course. The membership consists of France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom. The group set the exam paper and announced to the member countries the possibility of training for 2001. Requests for 35 trainees were received, however by 2001 this was reduced to 4 (1 from Luxembourg and 3 from Switzerland) who were trained in Germany. For 2002 there was a request for 20 trainee places and as in 2001 only 3 students will be trained in Germany. Due to this lack of interest the group prepared a report for the Interpol European committee which included the following comments:

- Poland has been offering this course to its national students (328 students so far and 160 scheduled for 2002) and has reported that the training course meets their needs;
- if funding could be found via Interpol or the European Union for example, the monitoring group believes that more countries would participate in this training program. Most countries will be limited in their choice of accredited training centres due to the training not being offered in a suitable language for their students;
- in addition to Germany and Poland, Austria, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia have shown interest in using the program for their national students.

Taking all this into consideration the group feels that there is no need for the group to continue on a regular basis in its current form and proposes the following:

- those countries with training centres that have expressed interest in teaching the program to their own national students are supplied with the timetable and examination material to use for this purpose. If foreign students are trained they should send this information to Interpol so that the ERC can be kept aware of the interest. Interpol would act as a clearinghouse for this training and be responsible for reporting the annual results to the ERC.

Concerning Interpol and ENFSI there are several solutions to the way that training and standards are created in Europe and I mention some of the most important for your consideration:

- continue to work individually, this could easily be done as both institutions have mandates for organising working groups;
- sharing expertise: Interpol has a pool of experts that can be taken from all the 46 European member countries which is not necessarily the same as the ENFSI pool of experts;

- creation of joint working parties, experts from ENFSI could join with experts from Interpol to discuss together projects;
- Interpol could encourage member countries to include delegates from the ENFSI in their delegations at Interpol working groups.

Interpol looks forward to cooperating with the ENFSI Fingerprint WG in the future so that we have good training and good standards for the fingerprint practitioners now and of the future.