### Step forward against migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean

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**Eurojust at Seventh SHADE MED FORUM**

Today and tomorrow, in Rome, the Seventh [European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED)](https://www.operationsophia.eu/) Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED) FORUM (the Forum) is bringing together military, judicial and police experts from various countries and organisations to better coordinate their actions against migrant smuggling and organised crime in the Mediterranean. The Forum’s participants are sharing their knowledge and best practice to strengthen international cooperation and coordination of military, industrial and civilian resources and operations in that highly exposed region.

The Forum is a platform for exchanging information and assessing emerging trends to maximise the effect of existing partnerships and to explore new cooperative avenues. The Forum participants therefore focus on raising situational awareness of all partners involved as well as on finding new areas of common interest and collaboration, for example between the military and the shipping industry. They work towards adopting a more comprehensive approach to regional activities, especially when dealing with migrant smuggling cases that often involve sophisticated organised crime groups, other crime types, and several States, including third countries. Hence, the Forum’s participants stressed the need to identify, classify, validate and report all migrant data to achieve a common understanding and produce more results. They also work to improve the capacity-building process in various countries by examining national and international initiatives and by applying new training modules.

Eurojust is represented at the Forum by its Vice-President and National Member for Italy, Mr Filippo Spiezia. Mr Spiezia presented Eurojust’s unique contribution to cross-border cooperation against migrant smuggling, which helps reduce impunity in this crime area. Mr Spiezia emphasized the effectiveness of Eurojust’s advanced judicial cooperation tools, such as joint investigation teams (JITs), particularly in complex, multilateral migrant smuggling cases, and thus the added value of referring more cases to Eurojust. Special attention was given to following a holistic approach towards poly-criminal activities, such as migrant smuggling, by improving cooperation with key partners and third countries, using the most appropriate judicial tools, and promoting the judicial dimension of tackling organised crime. Eurojust strongly encourages national authorities to initiate parallel financial investigations to trace the proceeds of migrant smuggling and also provides practical support to the investigations. Eurojust will continue its effective coordinating role by facilitating early information exchange between all partners and by supporting national investigations related to cross-border crime as soon as they are launched.