



## INTERPOL 100

### *‘Connecting Police For a Safer World’*



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### Abstract

**Aim:** The aim of this paper is to outline the century-long, instructive history of international police cooperation.

**Methodology:** The authors of the paper analyse and organise the pre-WWII Hungarian and contemporary English literature, as well as the data published on the INTERPOL website to mark the anniversary.

**Findings:** The predecessor organisation was set up in 1923 with the idea that police forces in different countries should work together to detect crime and curb cross-border crime through arrest and extradition procedures, identification techniques and criminal records. Many of the objectives and tools of that time are still the basis for joint work today. As security challenges and international organised crime activities and technological responses to them evolved, INTERPOL grew into the effective international organisation that now supports and coordinates the work of law enforcement agencies in 195 countries.

**Value:** This milestone anniversary of INTERPOL provides an opportunity to look back over the last century of international police cooperation. The study takes a fresh look at the subject. It briefly presents the contemporary Hungarian reception of the initial steps in organisational and technical development, INTERPOL’s own assessment of the past 100 years, and the analyses of certain periods published by foreign experts on the subject.

**Keywords:** police, globalisation, INTERPOL, international cooperation

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## Introduction

Globalisation probably began in 1492, when Columbus' ships set out to explore a new continent. After that, continents that had previously seemed unknown were continually being explored and intercontinental trade and movement of people began. The next big wave of globalisation was boosted by the industrial revolutions. The spread of steam trains and ships gradually reduced the distances between continents and states. The opportunity to travel was not only a benefit for industry and people who wanted to travel, but also for scammers, criminals and those who wanted to evade prosecution. The perpetrators of the various crimes, when the situation became increasingly dangerous for them, took advantage of the fast rail and later automobile transport and fled. They travelled first to other cities and then to other countries. In the newly discovered continents, opportunities, new investments and the building of railways attracted millions of settlers to the 'New World'. Alongside emigration from Europe and the migration of labour due to industrial development, crime also internationalised. In the 20th century, globalisation accelerated with the development of transport, the emergence and rapid expansion of air transport and the explosion of the data revolution. The effects of the industrial revolutions, with the spread of mass-produced goods and the introduction of the Morse telegraph and telephone, have contributed greatly to the deepening of internationalisation, changed lifestyles, boosted international tourism, international trade and economic life, and created new forms of money and securities (paper money, bills of exchange, shares), all of which have also provided opportunities for the spread of international crime. In the 19th century, with the emergence of modern law enforcement, the need for international cooperation to detect and arrest criminals moving between states arose (No Author, 1905).

At first, this took the form of 'friendly' international police congresses. The first manifestations of police cooperation were the congresses for cooperation against anarchism in Rome and St Petersburg, and the meeting in Paris<sup>1</sup> to prevent the trafficking of girls. With the spread of motorisation came the need for international regulations on transport, which was established at the 1909 International Conference of Automobile Clubs in Paris. *'Between 5 and 11 October 1909, representatives of the following countries met in Paris to negotiate a system for regulating the international circulation of motor vehicles on the*

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1 Later, in 1910, Dr. Vilmos Lers, Minister Counsellor for Trade, was sent to Paris on behalf of Hungary *'to sign the international convention on the suppression of the trade in girl children and the international agreement on the suppression of the circulation of vulgar publications'*. (National Archives of Hungary, s.a.).

*basis of uniform principles: the United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Monaco, Montenegro, Italy, Russia, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Serbia.* (URL2). Subsequently, in 1914, at the Monaco Police Congress, the idea of real international police cooperation and its implementation came to the fore, with the foreign policy actors being marginalised. The First World War put these initiatives on hold for a time, but after the war, international police conferences were held again, and the statements made at these conferences led to the establishment of INTERPOL, after known as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), on 7 September 1923 (Sallai & Borszéli, 2022).

The need for international police cooperation came to the fore at the first international conference in Hamburg in 1905. The founding father of INTERPOL was Edmond Locard,<sup>2</sup> who realised in the early 1900s that *'to fight international crime, an international police force must be used'* (URL1). Later, its main supporter was Prince Albert of Monaco, who was a significant contributor to the formation of the Monaco Conference. This was followed by the tangible initiative of Johannes Schober,<sup>3</sup> Vienna's Chief of Police, which led to the practical establishment of an organisation for international cooperation in criminal matters on 7 September 1923. *'In 1923, he organised the II International Criminal Police Congress in his hometown of Perg, Upper Austria, where police organisations from nineteen countries were represented. It was agreed at the meeting that the participating countries would set up the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), whose constitution, consisting of ten articles, was adopted.'* (URL3).

2023 will mark one hundred years of this, a century in which international police cooperation has steadily developed, while the number of Member States has grown. In our study, we look at the major events of this century. While there is a wealth of literature on the subject, we will only focus on the most important and interesting events due to space constraints.

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2 French professor Edmond Locard, founder of the first forensic laboratory and catalyst for international police cooperation.

3 Johann Schober (1874–1932, Austrian police officer, chief captain of Vienna and later chancellor of Austria for two terms.

## The Evolution of the Idea of International Police Cooperation in the Light of Contemporary Hungarian Sources

The beginnings of international police cooperation can be traced back to the first decades of the 19th century, when international friendships and acquaintanceships between police officers began. Its main mission is to see how police forces in different countries can work together without politicians being involved. The first international police congress could have been held in Budapest, if the people behind the idea had been able to organise the event for the millennium. The idea was reported in the *Budapesti Hírlap* in 1895 as follows. '*This international congress on public security, the plan of which was put forward by the editorial staff of the Rendőri Lapok,*<sup>4</sup> *was received with great approval in the highest circles, and all support was promised, and the congress has already been booked by the exhibition's management. Originally, only a national congress on public security was planned, but foreign countries expressed such great interest in this congress that an international congress, with the consent of the competent circles, seemed to be assured in advance.*' (*Budapesti Hírlap*, 1895). For various reasons the planned event did not take place, and for a long time, until 1930, Hungary did not host an international police conference. The public security exhibition planned as part of the millennium was also cancelled.

With a purpose to develop international cooperation, police conferences and meetings of an international character were held in Buenos Aires in 1905, Madrid in 1909, San Paolo in 1912, Washington in 1913 and Monaco from 14–19 April 1914 (First International Criminal Police Congress, 1914). But the latter was more than a networking meeting of international police officers. Here, participants<sup>5</sup> have already sought to achieve the following specific cooperation.

- *Improving direct and official relationships between police forces in various countries.*
- *Free use of postal, telephone and telegram services for police forces to facilitate arrests.*
- *Using the same language during cooperation.*<sup>6</sup>

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4 Police Gazettes.

5 The Hungarian police were represented by Béla Gábor and Jenő Marinovich (Magyar Rendőr, 1939).

6 '*The then Superintendent of the Municipal Police of Paris, Lucien Mouquin proposed the adoption of the Esperanto constructed language as a single contact and auxiliary language. The reason given for his proposal was that an international organisation had already been set up in Antwerp in 1911, whose members were police officers who could speak Esperanto and which also published a police journal. Mouquin was unable to get the proposal accepted because the multilinguals attending the congress did not want to give up this advantage and, under the guise of doing so, questioned the usability of the constructed language. This decision could not, of course, stop the development of Esperanto, but it neither solved the problem.*' (Tóth, 1938).

- *Forensic science training should be provided for law and law enforcement students.*
- *Increasing the number of law enforcement and police academies in the countries.*
- *Establish an identification system to identify international offenders.*
- *Creation of a central registry database repository.*
- *Study and create a model extradition treaty to assist in the surveillance of criminals.*
- *Direct and immediate transmission of extradition requests.*
- *Working together for rapid extradition.* (Sallai, 2022).

These ideas proved to be an illusion in the second half of the 1910s, as the Great War took place. As with so much else, the First World War put a brake on international police cooperation.

At the same time, during the First World War, Albert Irk, in his notes on criminology, highlighted the need for international cooperation as the only solution against international commercial criminals. In his opinion, *‘the two main symptoms of the modern development of criminality are the specialisation and the internationalisation of the miscreant.’* (Irk, 1915). According to Irk, states cannot be effective against international miscreants if they only act in isolation. Only organised international action is the solution. In our opinion, Irk was before his time when he stated that *‘the international police intelligence office would be at the centre of the organisation. It would be the point where the telephone networks of the police authorities of the various states would converge.’* (Irk, 1915). The main task of this new international police organisation would be to solve theoretical and scientific questions and to take practical action (Irk, 1915) against the most dangerous international criminals, including the international hotel thieves, cashiers, merchants, etc., and to control the international financial market and stock exchange. Irk considered that an international laboratory was essential for practical cooperation, so that investigations could be supported. He saw all this as impracticable only after the war.

At the same time, countries had already recognised the importance of extraditing international criminals, but at the time this was only achieved through bilateral treaties.

The fact that international police cooperation, as formulated in Monaco, is not a utopia was confirmed by the police conferences that were re-launched immediately after the peace treaties that ended the First World War. The first sign of this was the initiative taken by Dutch police officer Van Hauten in 1920, which,

at the time, was premature, but as the preservation of his name suggests, it did not become a mere cry for help.

In 1923, after the First World War, international crime statistics showed that crime levels were at their highest ever, regardless of whether a country was a winner or a loser. This situation forced the representatives of 20 states at the International Police Congress, convened in Vienna in September 1923, to create an institutional framework for international criminal cooperation, and the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) was established by unanimous decision. The novelty of this Organisation is that the Member States' administrations now cooperated to the exclusion of intermediate organisations. In order to ensure effective international cooperation, the following organisations have been set up for the international organisation.

- 1) *'News service on international offenders, international evidence.*
- 2) *International Register of Investigators.*
- 3) *International registry of dangerous public criminals.*
- 4) *International Radio communication Code for communication by telegraph between police authorities.'* (Schober, 1927).

One of the most important areas of international police cooperation, which was stepped up in 1923, was the implementation of the exchange of information. A new form of this was first implemented at Member State level, police radio traffic, which later led to the implementation of image transmission. This could have raised the international practice of warrants to a higher level. The police radio could also ensure the rapid flow of information for the transmission of police news, the ordering of border closures, the issuing of standard measures, the targeting of offenders, etc. (Szentirmay, 1926).

As in national and international public life, security of persons and property has been in the centre of attention. To this end, a new police congress was convened in Berlin in 1926, and the Berlin International Police Exhibition was held in this context. The main aim of the Congress was to organise an international criminal police force and to set up an International Police Office under the supervision of the League of Nations. The main themes of the Congress were:

- Use of a plotter;
- The issue of misuse of firearms;
- Police emergency radio call;
- Introduction of a standardised registration form to establish identity;
- Fighting and protecting against illicit drug trafficking (Schober, 1927).

In parallel with the congress, an international police conference was organised to address the challenges of traffic policing and urban planning in the context of the motorisation of the transport sector, which had by then reached a significant scale. In addition to the Police Congress and Conference, the International Police Exhibition,<sup>7</sup> organised for the public and the law enforcement professional community, was a great success with pavilions dedicated to police administration, law enforcement and criminal justice (Weninger, 1926). The Hungarian pavilion was also a great success, with an exhibition on riverside police, gendarmerie and police.

In the same year, the International Motor Vehicle Conference was held in Paris, where a number of international transport policy issues were discussed, mainly from the customs and border police aspects.

By the end of the 1920s, Hungarian law enforcement literature was already continuously reporting on the results of international police cooperation, congresses and ideas. Effective cooperation requires mutual knowledge between the police forces of the Member States, which is why the professional exchange visits have been launched. Within this framework, Hungarian police officers have visited Finland, Poland, Germany, France, Great Britain, etc. to get acquainted with the organisation and activities of the police forces there. Similarly, police officers from many countries have visited our country for similar purposes. In 1929, for example, the New York Police Commissioner, who had previously hosted the New York Police Congress twice, in 1921–23, and attended the founding congress of INTERPOL in Vienna in 1923, visited our country (MTI, 1929). The experience of mutual professional exchange led Carl Riege, a police major at the German Police Institute, to the conclusion in the pages of *Magyar Detektív* that it was time to organise a unified European police academy (Riege, 1928).

In the following periods, police congresses, committee meetings and mutual professional exchanges took place in order to make international police cooperation as effective as possible. Among these, the following international police events are outstanding, which will not be described in detail due to space limitations.

1927. Amsterdam (It was decided that each Member State should set up a central contact point.)

1930. International Police Radio Congress in Budapest.

1931. League of Nations Conference of Central Police Bureaux in Geneva.

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7 With the participation of Argentina, Cuba, Gdansk, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Spain, Switzerland and Poland.

1932. International Police Congress in Rome (creation of the post of Secretary General).

1934. International Police Congress in Vienna.

1936. International Criminal Police Commission meeting in Belgrade (focusing on identification, passports and dactyloscopy).

1937. International Criminal Police Commission Congress in Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup> (An interesting feature of the congress was that it made a special reference to women police officers, who were condemned by police participants at the time.)

1937. International Criminal Police Commission meeting in London.

1938. International Police Conference in Bucharest.

1938 was the last year of peace in which the representatives (police officers) of the Member States of the international police and crime organisation envisioned by Johann Schober could work together in an atmosphere of peace they had set themselves against international miscreants.

The first decades of INTERPOL can be summed up with the following reflections: *'The personal contact of people, the exchange of ideas, their debates, the affinities created at the green and white tables, the recognition and appreciation of values, agreements, the personal redemption of a common destiny and destiny are the real cohesive force that makes this international coexistence a permanent, living reality.'* (Nemzetközi együttműködés, 1938). By the late 1930s, there was international cooperation between police forces around the world, which ensured that international miscreants could not hide from accountability on Earth. At the now regular conferences, both professional and friendly relations were established between police officers, regardless of whether they represented opposing states. This was particularly important in the second half of the 1930s, when the signs of the outbreak of the Second World War were already becoming apparent. As an anchor for international police cooperation, *'Police oblige!'* has become a common saying and practice in public law enforcement life. (Nemzetközi együttműködés, 1938) And although the last police conference in Bucharest before the Second World War concluded with the representatives of the 23 nations talking about carrying on good practice and deepening friendly and professional relations, the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 and the Nazi victory brought an end to this.

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8 The police dictionary was presented at this congress, but so far no trace of it has been found. This dictionary contained the police terminology used in several languages at the time. The dictionary facilitated professional contacts. To the best of our knowledge, it was published in 5-6 (?) languages.

## History of INTERPOL Based on English Language Sources

The Organisation's website ([URL4](#), [URL5](#)) also commemorates the centenary of its creation and highlights some of the most important milestones in INTERPOL's history. Researchers on the topic point out that in order to understand the organisation, current status and functioning of INTERPOL, it is essential to be aware of the historical antecedents that initiated international police cooperation and eventually led to the creation of an organisation that continues to coordinate such efforts today ([Calcara, 2022](#)).

Like many other researchers on the subject, INTERPOL considers the first congress of the International Criminal Police Organization, held in Monaco in 1914, to be the event that gave birth to the idea of the organisation, even before its formal foundation in 1923. According to their assessment, although the meeting was very successful, the outbreak of the First World War meant that the idea of an international police organisation would have to wait nearly a decade. The English-language literature also deals – among other things – with the 19th century antecedents as events in which the aspiration for international police cooperation is already really evident ([Sallai & Borszéli, 2022](#)), and also seeks the reasons for the relatively late establishment of the international organisation. In their view, the need for collective action against the anarchist movements against conservative, autocratic state institutions in the years after 1848 was one of the important factors that led to the first international conferences ([Calcara, 2020](#)). Other such factors were that police institutions were gradually freed from political policing functions and, as autonomous professional organisations, could focus on clearly criminal objectives ([Deflem, 2002a](#); [Calcara, 2022](#)) and establish channels of direct communication between themselves ([Jäger, 2019](#)). One of the aims of the first international conferences, including the Monaco conference in 1914, was to eliminate lengthy extradition procedures that required diplomatic intervention. The creation of a genuine police organisation required a shift of emphasis from legal and diplomatic initiatives and objectives to professional police and law enforcement aspects, and the delegates' states had to promote international police cooperation, for example by changing legislation, following the decisions taken at the conferences. These were all to be awaited until a decade after the First World War ([Jäger, 2019](#)).

INTERPOL considers 7 September 1923 as the next milestone on the way to the establishment of the Organisation, when the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) was founded at the initiative of the President of the Vienna Police, Dr Johannes Schober, at the Second International Police Congress in Vienna, attended by delegates from 20 countries, including Hungary ([URL4](#),

[URL5](#)). Calcara points out that although the meeting was in principle intended as a follow-up to the 1914 conference, the starting point was fundamentally different. Schober, who was a member of the police force, knew the mentality, practical needs, wishes and expectations of his colleagues regarding international police cooperation. It should also be mentioned that not only most European countries were represented at the event, but also China, Egypt, Japan and the USA ([Calcara, 2020](#)).

The overall aim of the ICPC was to facilitate mutual assistance between police forces in different countries. The structure and objectives of the Organisation were documented in several regulations.

The main objectives, which are still part of INTERPOL's activities today, included:

- Ensuring direct police communication;
- Cooperation in arrests and extraditions;
- Definition of common languages;
- Establishing offices to combat counterfeiting of currency, cheques and passports;
- Develop and establish fingerprinting techniques and registers.

Johannes Schober was president of the ICPC from its foundation until 1932. Austria offered to host and finance the headquarters of the Organisation in Vienna. Schober was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee and the lawyer Dr Oskar Dressler, head of the Austrian Federal Police, was appointed Secretary ([URL5](#)).

## **Changes and Main Stages of Organisational Development**

The Organisation also cites the 4th General Assembly held in Amsterdam in 1927 as an important milestone, at which it was decided that each Member State should establish a central contact point within its police structure – the predecessor of today's national offices ([URL5](#)).

By 1930, special departments were set up to deal with criminal registers, counterfeiting and passport forgery ([URL5](#)).

In 1938, the German National Socialists replaced President Michael Skubl and took control of the ICPC. Most countries suspended their participation and the ICPC as an international organisation virtually ceased to exist. In 1942, the Organisation came under full German control and its headquarters were moved to Berlin. INTERPOL understandably does not detail these years in its own

history, but the English-language literature points out that, paradoxically, Nazi control was made possible by the Organisation's apolitical nature and its need to be free from legal constraints. The ICPC was set up without a legal contract. The way to become a member was not clearly defined: countries that were not represented at the 1923 Congress could join the ICPC by recruiting one of their police forces or even a single police officer, which was done by a simple registration and payment of the membership fee (Deflem, 2002a). The increased involvement of Nazi officials in the activities of the ICPC in the first half of the 1930s can be seen as a means of influencing the work of the Commission and gaining authority. It did not go unnoticed for long, but the members had no significant instrument to prevent it. As a result of the Anschluss, the presidency of the ICPC was quickly taken over by the Nazi regime and ceased to fulfil its original mandate, only to become an extremely dangerous instrument in the hands of the Nazi regime. A widely accepted theory is that the Nazi regime used the ICPC register to implement its nefarious policies. This theory is partly supported by the fact that even today it is unclear what became of these files (Calcara, 2020). The ICPC continued to operate – at least formally – during the war. However, when the US gained control of Berlin, its activities were abruptly suspended (Deflem, 2002b).

Following the Second World War, transnational crime has boomed across the European continent and the need to promote international police cooperation has been renewed (Calcara, 2020). The reconstitution of the Organisation was led by Belgium. In 1946, the ICPC adopted a new constitution, a democratic procedure was introduced for the election of the President and the Executive Committee, and the headquarters were moved to Paris, France.<sup>9</sup> The same year, INTERPOL became the Organisation's telegraphic name. The INTERPOL logo and flag have been in use since 1950 (URL5).

In 1956, the participants in the Vienna General Assembly changed the name of the ICPC to the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL) by adopting a modernised Statute. The Organisation became autonomous by relying on membership fees and financial investments from Member States as its main means of income (URL4, URL5, Calcara, 2022).

INTERPOL's membership has been growing steadily since its creation. The 20 founding members in 1923 grew to 50 in 1955 and 150 in 1989. Changes in the membership of nations, such as the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, have also led to new members joining. Member States can be found

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9 The INTERPOL General Secretariat has been based in France since 1946, first in Paris, then in Saint Cloud from 1966 to 1989, before moving to its current headquarters in Lyon in 1989.

on all continents. Recognising the importance of sharing information and expertise at regional level, INTERPOL organised its first regional conference in Liberia in 1963. Countries in the same region often face similar criminal threats and problems, and the work of the Secretariat is supported by regional offices in seven countries (Thailand, Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Kenya, El Salvador, Cameroon) ([URL5](#), [Gerspacher, 2008](#)).

The working languages of the Organisation were French and English in the early days, Spanish was introduced in 1955 and Arabic was adopted as the fourth official language in 1999. Today, official documents are translated into all four languages and interpretation is provided for major conferences and meetings ([URL5](#)).

Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, as an important step in counter-terrorism ([Pizzato, 2019](#); [Calcara, 2020](#)), INTERPOL established the Command and Coordination Centre (CCC), which serves as a contact point for all Member States that require urgent police information or are in a crisis situation. Since 2003, multilingual staff has been on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In 2011, a second CCC Operations Centre was opened in the Buenos Aires regional office, and in 2015, a third in Singapore.

On 6 December 2005, the first INTERPOL and UN Security Council Special Wanted List was published, combining the UN sanctions regime and INTERPOL's well-established Wanted List system as an effective law enforcement tool. Its main function is to inform national law enforcement authorities of the sanctions imposed by the UNSC (asset freezes, travel bans, arms embargoes) against designated persons and entities.

Since 2007, the importance of police training has been defined as a core function of the Organisation.

A set of seven Global Policing Goals was adopted in 2018, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflecting INTERPOL's priorities to address the crime and terrorism threats:

Goal 1: Counter the threat of terrorism;

Goal 2: Promote border integrity worldwide;

Goal 3: Protect vulnerable communities;

Goal 4: Secure cyberspace for people and businesses;

Goal 5: Promote global integrity;

Goal 6: Curb illicit markets;

Goal 7: Support environmental security and sustainability ([URL6](#)).

International financial crime, which has grown exponentially in recent years, is undermining global financial systems, hampering economic growth and causing

huge losses to businesses and individuals worldwide. As a result of a coordinated international response, the Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Centre (IFCACC) became operational in 2022 ([URL5](#)).

## Technological Progress

The development of the technical tools available to INTERPOL is summarised in the table below.

**Table 1**  
*Development of INTERPOL's technological tools*

Year	Tool, description
1923.	The first wanted notices appear in the ICPC's international public security journal.
1930s	In addition to specialised departments for counterfeiting currency and passports, a comprehensive criminal registry system will be set up, which will include the names of criminals, identity and vehicle registration document details, as well as details of their offences classified by type and location. This will be supplemented by specialised fingerprint and photo records. (The data will initially be compiled and analysed manually.)
Since 1935	The ICPC's international radio network is set up, providing for the first time an independent telecommunications system for national criminal police authorities.
1946.	A colour-coded system of warrants called 'international notice' is established. Initially, there were five types of notices (red, blue, green, yellow and black – internationally wanted criminals, information relating to investigations, threats to public safety, missing persons and unidentified bodies).
2000.	An Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is to be introduced, which will significantly reduce the time needed for fingerprint checks.
2001.	An International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database will be created. Using image and video comparison software, expert investigators will be able to instantly identify links between victims, abusers and locations (2017 was the 10,000th identification, a milestone.)
2002.	The secure global police communication system known as I-24/7 is launched. It forms the core of all INTERPOL secure communications.
2002.	A database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) will be created to help Member States secure their borders and combat terrorists and other dangerous criminals travelling with false identity documents.
2002.	An INTERPOL DNA database is set up, which is used to detect crime, identify victims of disasters and locate missing persons.
2005.	For the first time, the INTERPOL and UN Security Council special (light blue) circular on groups and individuals subject to UN sanctions, mentioned above, is issued.
2011.	The first Purple Notice (method of committing offences) is issued.
2016.	A facial recognition system using an automated biometric software application will become operational, effectively complementing existing expertise and tools in fingerprint and DNA testing.

*Note.* Edited by the authors, based on INTERPOL ([URL5](#)).

## Summary

Although the world has changed a lot in the last century, many of the ICPC's goals and tools from 1923 are still the basis of our collaborations today.

Direct contact used to be provided by central contact points, but now it is provided by national offices 24 hours a day. The main areas of cooperation are cross-border investigations, operations and arrests, sharing vital police information on a daily basis, and exchanging experience between police officers and experts ([URL7](#)).

Communication technology has developed enormously over the last century. In 1923, it would have been difficult to imagine the extent of the change that would occur in this field. In 1935, the first international radio network providing an independent telecommunications system for national criminal police authorities was a major achievement. Today, police forces around the world communicate via I-24/7, a web-based police communications system that gives national bureaus real-time access to a wide range of databases.

In 1923, the eighth regulation of the International Police Congress encouraged participating countries to use the fingerprint identification techniques developed by the Danish police and to create an international register. Today, the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), the DNA database and the facial recognition system allow thousands of identifications to be made per year. The criminal databases, which contain millions of records, include information on the names of criminals, stolen travel documents, stolen objects of virtue and vehicles, firearms, biometric data, images of child sexual abuse, etc. The response time for a query is less than one second!

The swift transmission of extradition requests has been a priority from the very beginning, as well as their use as a basis for pre-trial detention. Currently, thousands of electronic red notices are issued annually through secure police channels for the arrest, extradition or other similar action of wanted persons ([URL7](#)).

On 16 December 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a decision to establish an International Day of Police Cooperation in recognition of the vital work of law enforcement agencies around the world. Every year, on 7 September, the founding of INTERPOL's predecessor, the ICPC, in 1923, will be commemorated ([URL8](#)).

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