



The beginnings of INTERPOL

The Monaco National Central Bureau



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Abstract

Aim: This article presents the 1st international judicial police congress, which was held in Monaco, from 14 to 18 April 1914, as well as its outcome, and recalls the commemoration of its centenary at the 83rd session of the INTERPOL General Assembly, held in Monaco from 3 to 7 November 2014.

Methodology: Documents from Monegasque archives were used for the writing of this article. Some of them are published here.

Findings: From the beginning of the 20th century, the Principality of Monaco, under the leadership of a visionary Head of State, His Serene Highness Prince Albert I, was strongly involved in the implementation of instruments aimed at establishing international cooperation between the judicial police departments of different countries and improve exchanges in criminal matters, to facilitate the search and arrest of criminals. To this end, Monaco organised in 1914 the first congress that brought together police officers and lawyers, who were tasked with developing proposals to meet these new needs and put representatives from around twenty countries in direct contact with each other. The outbreak of the First World War, however, interrupted the continuation of the process of strengthening international exchanges initiated on this occasion, which should have led to a second stage planned in 1916 and eventually did not resume until 1923.

Value: 2023 is the year of the Centenary of the creation of the International Criminal Police Commission, which became the International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL. From a historical point of view, it is interesting to look at the beginnings of the founding of an international institution specialised in the field of fight against crime and to recall that this construction is the

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result of a more ancient reflection initiated at the beginning of the 20th century, which first materialised through an initiative in Monaco in 1914 (commemorated in 2014, also in Monaco). The resolutions that were adopted by the experts of the time, gathered at the invitation of the Principality, and are presented in this contribution underline the precision of the issues they had identified, as well as the relevance of the proposed solutions, some of those still being valid today.

Keywords: INTERPOL, history, judicial police, Monaco

109 years ago, Prince Albert I decided to bring together, in Monaco, police officers and lawyers from 27 different countries to consider the creation of a new organisation intended to facilitate the search and arrest of criminals.

Picture 1

Report from the International Judicial Police Congress



Note. Journal de Monaco du 5 Mai 1914.

In January 1914, Mr Joseph Henri Simard, Director of the ‘Sûreté publique’ was designated as Secretary General, meaning he was in charge of most of the organisation. He was assisted by Maître Georges Anquetil, lawyer at the Paris Court of Appeal.

Picture 2
Prince Albert I



Note. [URL1](#).

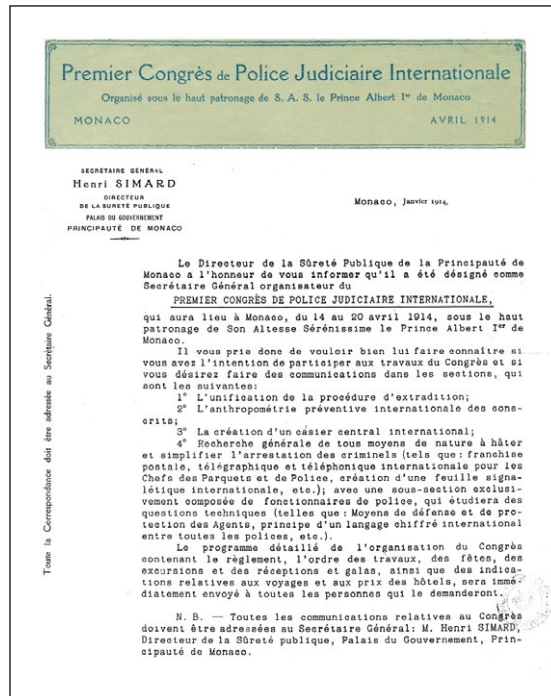
The 1st International Judicial Police Congress was held from 14 to 18 April 1914, at the Oceanographic Museum. It brought together 300 delegates, under the presidency of an imminent jurist, the dean of the Faculty of Paris, Professor Larnaude.

This 1st International Judicial Police Congress defined the bases of an organisation focused on the fight against crime and the pooling of operational resources to make it more effective. This visionary initiative constituted the first step in international police cooperation, the need for which has strengthened over time and accelerated in recent decades.

The primary reasons were to bring together representatives of the judiciary, the bar and the police, in order to facilitate the organisation of the judicial police at the international level.

In this context, it was proposed to extend the unification of police files, in particular photographs and fingerprints, by creating an 'international central locker', the ancestor of our international files.

Picture 3
Invitation letter



Note. Monegasque archives.

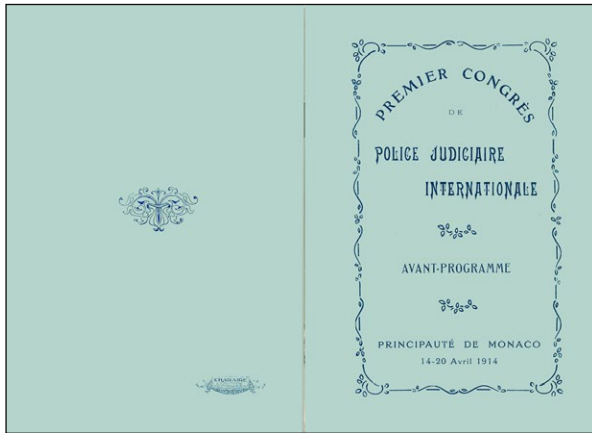
Subjects likely to improve, in international law, exchanges between countries in criminal matters were discussed.

The resolutions adopted should not oppose the principles and laws of the signatory countries.

The aim was to reach an international extradition treaty.

Picture 4

Preliminary programme (1914)



Note. [URL2](#).

Participants were divided into four sections depending on the nature of the work.

The first section

It was chaired by Mr. Goron, former head of the Paris Police.

Its assessors were Mr De Lebedeff, delegate of the Ministry of the Interior of Russia and Mr Reiss, director of the Institute of Forensic Science in Lausanne.

The wishes, which will be adopted at the end of the Congress, were as follows:

- I. The Congress of International Judicial Police expressed the wish to see generalisation and improvement of direct official police-to-police relations between different countries, in order to allow all investigations likely to facilitate the action of repressive justice.
- II. Congress expressed the hope that Governments agreed to grant, to all judicial and police authorities, international postal, telegraphic and telephone freedom, in order to facilitate the arrest of criminals.
- III. The Congress recognised the need for an international language in the reports of police officials belonging to different countries and expressed the wish to use French until Esperanto or any other similar language becomes widespread enough to be used for this purpose.
- IV. The Congress expressed the wish that the teaching of forensic science is given to students in all Faculties of Law.

The second section

It included president Mr Mouton, Director of the Judicial Police at the Paris Police Prefecture, Mr Maurice Quentin, President of the General Council of the Seine, and Mr Voinescu, Inspector General of the Police Services of Romania.

The Congress expressed the wish that the Government of the Principality of Monaco takes the initiative of requesting, from the Governments of the different countries, the appointment of an international Commission, composed of specialists, which would be responsible for preparing, in Paris, subject to the approval of the French Government, the bases for the creation of :

- the international safety data sheet;
- the classification system of these sheets;
- the determination of the categories to be established among common law criminals, so-called 'international' or 'cosmopolitan'.

The third section

Its president was Mr Nagels, substitute for the Attorney General at the Court of Appeal of Liège, and its assessors were Mr Dupin, President of the Montbrison Bar Association and Mr Niceforo, Professor at the Faculty of Law of Rome, delegate of the Italian Government.

The following single wish was voted:

The Congress of International Judicial Police retains the principle as likely to provoke the examination of the Powers concerned and requests the referral, for a more in-depth study, to the examination of the Commission whose principle was decided for the creation of an International Bureau of Identity.

The fourth section

Finally, the fourth section was made up of president Mr Baron Garofalo, Senator, President of Chamber at the Court of Cassation of Rome, Mr Mallein, Advisor to the Court of Cassation of Paris and Mr Frerejouan-du-Saint, Delegate of the Société Générale des Prisons, assessors.

The following four wishes have been adopted:

- I. The International Law Societies are studying the formation of a model extradition treaty and ask them to kindly make the results of their work known to the next International Judicial Police Congress.
- II. Extradition must be requested directly, from the State where the crime or offense was committed, to the judicial authority of the country where the

accused has taken refuge. In the event that extradition is granted by the judicial authority, the Government will always have the right to refuse it.

- III. Provisional arrest must always be possible, on the visa, by the judicial authority of the country of refuge, of the warrant issued by the judge of the country where the crime was committed. In the event of an emergency, it will be carried out upon simple notice of the existence of a warrant. Said arrest, including all operations which are the ordinary result of these warrants, will take place only for crimes or common law offenses. It will be immediately followed by the interrogation of the accused.
- IV. In the event of simultaneous prosecutions carried out in two different countries, the extradited person will be handed over to the requesting country as soon as the decision pronounced on the prosecutions against him in the requested country has become final, unless he is returned to the prisons of the requested country, to continue serving his sentence there, when the judicial authorities of the requesting country have, in turn, made a definitive decision.

As the debates progressed, decisions to the advantage of all participating States have been adopted most of the time by a very large majority, or even unanimously.

The creation of a single body, aimed at centralising certain information that can be used by the police of all countries, emerged from the adopted wishes.

Thus, the objective of the 1st International Judicial Police Congress was largely achieved, about bringing the heads of different police forces from around the world into closer contact, so that they were encouraged to provide mutual services in the increasingly delicate struggle they have to wage against international gangs of thieves.

Considering the success of this congress, the members decided to plan the next one in 1916 in Bucharest.

But history would not allow us to go beyond the second quarter of 1914. The assassination of the Archduke of Austria and Crown Prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Franz Ferdinand, on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), would serve as a pretext for the outbreak of the First World War.

Work only resumed in 1923 during the 2nd congress which was held in Austria and the creation of the International Criminal Police Commission-INTERPOL, at the initiative of the Director of the Vienna Police.

The world has changed since the beginning of the 20th century. Even if international cooperation was suspended during the two great world wars, between 1914 and 1918, then between 1939 and 1945, it resumed in 1946 with the creation of

the International Criminal Police Organization–INTERPOL which succeeded the ICPC–INTERPOL.

The Principality of Monaco has been a member of INTERPOL, ‘Europe’ region, since 21 June 1950. Like other member countries, the Monaco National Central Bureau is linked to the national services responsible for applying the law to other countries and the General Secretariat via the secure global police communications network I-24/7.

Police services have had to constantly adapt technical and legal tools to understand, ever better, the evolution of crime and carry out concerted operations to neutralise delinquents capable of using all technological progress for their benefit.

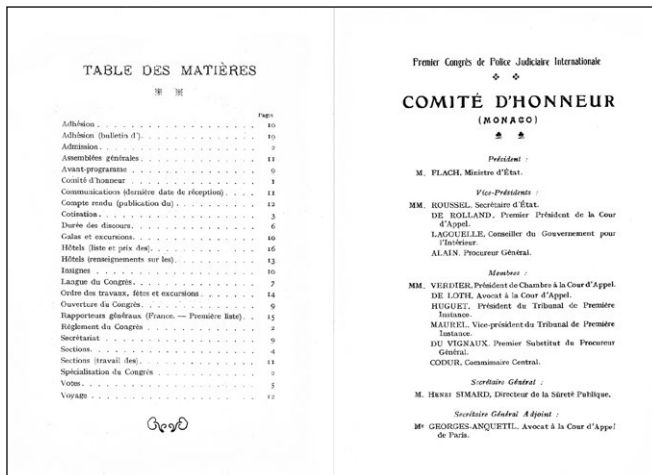
In order to improve police intervention capabilities, the INTERPOL General Secretariat organises annual general assemblies and European regional conferences, in different countries each time but with common rules at each session.

In this context, the Principality of Monaco welcomed:

- *18th European Regional Conference* from 29 to 31 March 1989,
- *83rd General Assembly* from 3 to 7 November 2014, to pay tribute to Prince Albert I who created the First International Judicial Police Congress.

Picture 5

Honorary Committee



Note. Monegasque archives.

The NCB Monaco also participates in the annual meetings of the Heads of National Central Bureaus of member countries, organised by the INTERPOL General Secretariat.

The NCB Monaco is attached to the Judicial Police Division of Monaco Public Security. It collaborates, particularly in international investigations, with:

- Law enforcement agencies in their country;
- Other NCBs and Sub-offices;
- General Secretariat offices around the world.

It feeds global databases with its criminal data, in compliance with national legislation, and cooperates in transnational investigations, operations and arrests.

Even if the Principality of Monaco remains a small nation from a geographical point of view, it is nonetheless very active internationally. Indeed, following armed robberies perpetrated by criminals affiliated with the ‘Pink Panthers’ gang in 2007, Monaco initiated the creation of the ‘*Pink Panthers*’ working group. Since then, several teams of robbers have been arrested and armed robberies have been avoided thanks to this daily active prevention.

In 2012, during the European Regional Conference in Israel, NCB Monaco was also included in the working group which was created to turn back crime by organised groups.

More recently, Monaco has participated in the network of cybercrime experts.

More than ever, ICPO–INTERPOL contributes to a safer world by being able to face the challenges of organised crime.

Thus, through its National Bureau, the Principality of Monaco remains an active member of INTERPOL in terms of international cooperation. It remains a force of proposal, its skills being recognised worldwide in the fight against international crime. The speed of execution of cross-border arrest requests remains one of its main characteristics.

Today, we have the pleasure of being all gathered in Vienna in the continuation of the visionary initiative of Prince Albert I, to say the least, in order to celebrate 100 years of the creation of INTERPOL and to take stock of the operational initiatives that have developed between the Heads of NCBs to contribute to a more secure world.

Picture 6

Prince Albert II, Mireille Balestrazzi and Ronald Noble on the 83rd INTERPOL General Assembly



Note. Public Security Directorate of the Principality of Monaco.

Online links in the article

URL1: *Prince Albert I.* <https://www.oceano.org/en/organization/the-great-figures/prince-albert-i/>
URL2: *Preliminary programme (1914).* <https://www.interpol.int/content/download/5664/file/1914-Invitation.pdf>

Reference of the article according to APA regulation

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