

Press Release

## Police Expert Network on Missing Persons officially recognised by Council of the European Union

**BRUSSELS, 20 November 2019.** The Police Expert Network on Missing Persons (hereinafter PEN-MP) was officially recognised by a body of the Council of the European Union, with the meeting of the Law Enforcement Working Party<sup>3</sup> (hereinafter LEWP) on October 18<sup>th</sup>. AMBER Alert Europe foundation, the initiator of PEN-MP, states that all European member states voted in favour of formalising the first and only police network that brings together law enforcement specialists on missing persons, and missing children specifically.

With 37.5 percent of Europeans living near the border, a missing person can easily cross to a neighbouring country. However, the search for missing persons often stagnates at this exact border. To improve the search for missing persons across Europe, it is thus crucial for police forces to communicate and cooperate with their counterparts in other countries. Because of the PEN-MP, police experts know exactly who is the single point of contact for missing persons abroad.

### Network of knowledge and expertise

Founded by the AMBER Alert Europe foundation (hereinafter AMBER Alert Europe) as an informal network of police experts, the PEN-MP so far consists of over 50 law enforcement missing person experts from 21 countries<sup>1</sup>, most of which are EU Member States. The PEN-MP strives to improve the search for all missing persons but gives special attention to missing children with their vulnerabilities, making it particularly important that there is a speedy response when they go missing. Besides facilitating cross-border cooperation, the PEN-MP also provides specialist support, advice and training to its members.

### The first PEN-MP presidency (2018-2020)

In 2018, Colonel Jan Rybár, Head of the Missing Persons Unit of the Czech Police Presidium, was officially appointed as first president of the network; a position he currently holds. The Czech Police Presidium played a crucial role in the formalisation of the PEN-MP by presenting the case to the European council and by organising several successful international police cooperation events on missing children in cooperation with the AMBER Alert Europe.

---

<sup>1</sup>the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, and Canada.



### **Strict separation of operational activities**

AMBER Alert Europe is primarily responsible for administrative and logistical support of the PEN-MP, including its Public Affairs. The foundation also facilitates the PEN-MP's expert training sessions and supports, manages and supervises the EU-funded PEN-MP projects. These activities are strictly separated from the operational police activities of the PEN-MP. The exchange of operational police information takes place through the official channels ( such as SIS, SIENA, and INTERPOL), also respecting the EU legal framework plus relevant legislation, directives and regulations relating to privacy and data protection.<sup>2</sup>

### **Official recognition by Council of the European Union**

The PEN-MP was announced in 2016 under the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union. At its launch, the Dutch Presidency called on every Member State to appoint a national contact for the network. In support of the Dutch initiative, a majority of 465 Members of the European Parliament from all EU Member States signed AMBER Alert Europe's Written Declaration for better European cooperation on saving the lives of missing children. The PEN-MP is now officially recognised by the Council of the European Union with its formal affiliation to LEWP<sup>3</sup>.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

#### **Press information:**

[www.amberalert.eu/press/](http://www.amberalert.eu/press/) & [www.penmp.eu](http://www.penmp.eu)

#### **About AMBER Alert Europe foundation**

AMBER Alert Europe is a registered foundation under Dutch law that assists in saving missing children at risk by connecting law enforcement with other police experts and with the public across Europe. AMBER Alert Europe advocates that one missing child is one too many and aims for zero missing children in Europe.

AMBER Alert Europe brings together 32 official organisations, public authorities and business entities from 21 countries. The foundation actively contributes to the EU and national policy debate on saving missing children. AMBER Alert Europe also officially facilitates [the Police Expert Network on Missing Persons \(PEN-MP\)](#), so far consisting of over 50 experts from 21 countries, and the Task Force on AMBER Alerts. The goals of AMBER Alert Europe are backed by 465 Members of the European Parliament: most successful Written Declaration since 2011.

---

<sup>2</sup> The exchange of operational information with non-EU countries is done through the Interpol.

<sup>3</sup> The Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP) is one of the highly specialised working parties and committees, known as the 'Council preparatory bodies'. LEWP handles work relating to legislative activities as well as cross-border policing and related operational issues.



AMBER Alert Europe is a neutral platform. It operates either evidence based (scientifically proven) or expert based. All activities are executed with respect for the privacy of missing persons and data protection laws.

More information: [www.amberalert.eu/press/](http://www.amberalert.eu/press/) & [www.penmp.eu](http://www.penmp.eu)

### Questions?

Please contact the AMBER Alert Europe Press office:

**Email:** [press@amberalert.eu](mailto:press@amberalert.eu)

**Phone:** +32 2 808 2159