

The European Union's response to war crimes

Ensuring accountability for core international crimes committed during armed conflict is increasingly a collective effort. Refugees who can give important witness or victim testimonies rapidly spread across the globe. Crucial evidence uploaded on social media may be stored on a server in any given country. Most decisive, perhaps, is the growing awareness amongst the international legal community that we have a moral obligation to defend the rights of those who have fallen victim to the most heinous of crimes under the most terrible of circumstances.

As a result, we now often see different investigations and prosecutions taking place in parallel: by the country where an armed conflict is happening, by countries who are exercising universal jurisdiction, and by independent international tribunals such as the International Criminal Court. In his intervention, the President of Eurojust, Ladislav Hamran, will describe how the European Union aims to contribute to an effective coordination of these various efforts while addressing recurring challenges that follow from a complex and fragmented operational landscape.

In particular, Mr Hamran will explain the benefits of advanced judicial cooperation tools such as Joint Investigation Teams and the importance of further digitalisation. Regarding the latter, he will highlight a recent change to Eurojust's mandate that will result in a database for the central storage and analysis of core international crime evidence, including photographs, satellite images, videos and audio recordings. This database has the potential to become a real game changer in bringing justice to victims of armed conflicts anywhere in the world.