

INTERPOL

mission it is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administrations throughout the world. It has 145 member countries or territories.

Headquarters: Rue de l'Industrie 26-38, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium.

Secretary-General: J. W. Shaver (USA).

INTERPOL (INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANIZATION)

Organization: Founded in 1914 and composed of 177 member countries, INTERPOL provides assistance to the law enforcement community. The police of any Member State can communicate with the police of any other Member State using INTERPOL's 4 official languages: English, Arabic, French and Spanish.

Aims: Under Article 2 of the Organization's Constitution, INTERPOL's aims are:

(a) 'To ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities, within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

(b) To establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.'

The limits of its actions are laid down in Article 3:

'It is strictly forbidden for the Organization to undertake any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.' A political offence is one which is considered to be of a predominantly political nature because of the surrounding circumstances and underlying motives, even if the offence itself is covered by the ordinary criminal law in the country in which it was committed. But offences are not considered to be political when they are committed outside a 'conflict area', and when the victims are not connected with the aims or objectives pursued by the offenders.

Co-operation with INTERPOL is based on actions taken by the police forces in the various Member States, operating within their own national boundaries and in accordance with their own national laws. All Member States are provided with the same services and have the same rights, irrespective of the size of their financial contributions to the Organization.

Although governed by principles designed to ensure regularity and continuity, working methods are flexible enough to take account of the wide variety of structures and situations in different countries. Respect for these principles means that INTERPOL cannot have teams of detectives with supranational powers who travel around investigating cases in different countries. International co-operation has to depend on co-ordinated action on the part of the Member States' police forces, all of which may supply or request information or services as needed.

Headquarters: Quai Charles de Gaulle, 69006 Lyon, France.

Website: <http://193.123.144.14/interpol-pr/>

Secretary-General: Raymond E. Kendall, QPM MA.