

## **The EnviCrimeNet Steering Group meets in Bratislava on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

The EnviCrimeNet Steering Group Members meeting was held between the 15th and 16th February 2022 at the Headquarters of the Police Force, in Bratislava, Slovakia, chaired by Mr. Ondrej Koporec, Chairman of the EnviCrimeNet.

The ECN steering group constituted by National Agency representatives from AT, BE, DE, ES, NL, FR, IT, SK and Europol (as the secretariat), focused on the state of implementation of the project Life+Satec, and the planning of the pending activities for the upcoming closure of the project.

The conversation revolved around various themes, being the need to increase awareness of fighting environmental crime, the Life+ Satec project progress and the formalization of the EnviCrimeNet network as an NPO, the main ones.

A new concept for monitoring progress in the awareness of fighting environmental crime, was presented between the participants. The concept would be based on multiple progress indicators, including legislation, statistics, organizational support, education and training, interagency and international cooperation, and implementation of recommendations.

The project auditor joined the discussion on the outcomes of the Life+ Satec project, praising the project's progress and expressing confidence that the project's extension will serve to extend some activities and strengthen the EnviCrimeNet network.

On the other hand, the formalization of EnviCrimeNet as an NPO was discussed between the participants as an important point of discussion. The conclusion of this point was that the formalization is in process and will hopefully be a reality by summer 2023.

The need to address the purpose of the ECN network after environmental crime was included in the EMPACT priorities was pointed out, as well as the lack of resources in several countries complicating the fight against this criminal activity. The focus should be on utilizing the knowledge of the network's experts and establishing an agenda that would make Europe safer.

Another point that was also brought up, was the upcoming Annual General Assembly of EnviCrimeNet, that will be held in Sweden. General Assemblies are a unique opportunity for experts to exchange information on environmental crime and share solutions. The potential of the EnviCrimeNet lies in the fact that it brings together representatives of police forces, allowing exchange of information to identify new threats, draw attention to legislative shortcomings, and to create documents presenting necessary proposals.