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Answer given by Ms Johansson  
on behalf of the European Commission  
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Since the establishment of the European Cyber Crime Centre (EC3) at Europol in 2013, a decryption platform has been operated at Europol's headquarters. Under Articles 3 and 4(1)(g) of the Europol Regulation, Europol's task is to support Member States with technical and forensic tools. Dedicated authorised Europol staff operates the decryption platform, which is used in criminal investigations under judicial oversight, at the request of a competent authority, under the provisions of the Europol Regulation and respective applicable national law.

To date, Europol supports the decryption of data at rest of devices seized lawfully during the course of criminal investigations. The decryption platform is not designed to intercept and decrypt data in transit. With respect to future new technologies, Europol is subject to a rigorous governance framework, which includes robust supervision arrangements, including by the European Data Protection Supervisor. Under Article 39 of the Europol Regulation, the use of new technologies by Europol is subject to prior consultation with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

Encryption plays a fundamental role in ensuring strong cybersecurity and the effective protection of fundamental rights, such as privacy, including the confidentiality of communications, and protection of personal data. At the same time, it may also make it more difficult for law enforcement and the judiciary to detect criminal activities. The Commission believes that any technical solution to obtain lawful access to evidence should not generally weaken encryption.