

# ARIEN NEWS LETTER

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# ARIEN

Artificial Intelligence in fighting illicit drugs  
production and traffickiNg

## ARIEN socials



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# NATIONAL DRUG COORDINATORS MEETING ON AI AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES



(ENG), represented ARIEN at the event.

The ARIEN project took part in the National Drug Coordinators Meeting, held on 16-17 December 2025, entitled “**Future challenges and possibilities: Threats and opportunities of AI and other advanced technologies**”. The project coordinator, Ernesto La Mattina of Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A

The meeting brought together national drug coordinators and key European stakeholders to discuss the rapidly evolving landscape of drug trafficking and drug-related crime, and the growing role that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies are playing in this field. Particular attention was given to how technological innovation can support more effective policy-making, prevention strategies and operational responses, while also addressing the risks and ethical challenges associated with their use.

Within this context, ARIEN contributed to discussions on how technology-driven solutions can support public authorities and law enforcement agencies in addressing increasingly sophisticated criminal networks. The project’s objectives and activities are closely aligned with the priorities discussed during the meeting, particularly in relation to innovation, interoperability, and evidence-based approaches.



# 6TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**LJUBLJANA, 21 AND 22 JANUARY 2026**

Hsted by Pošta Slovenije, the meeting marked a key milestone as the project advances toward operational validation and real-world deployment of its AI solutions.

The Assembly provided a valuable opportunity to review the outcomes of the first round of trainings and pilot activities; align on upcoming technical milestones; officially launch tool testing under Pilot 2; and strengthen coordination as ARIEN enters a more intensive testing phase.

As ARIEN progresses, the focus is increasingly on validating AI tools in real operational environments, ensuring that innovation translates into measurable operational impact for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

The two-day meeting was characterized by productive discussions, knowledge exchange, and strong engagement from all partners. The collaborative spirit demonstrated throughout the sessions reflects the consortium's shared commitment to advancing AI-driven solutions to combat illicit drug production and trafficking.

The next General Assembly will take place in Rome on 21-22 April 2026.



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# THE EUDA TECHNOLOGY FORESIGHT WORKSHOP

Through the participation of its coordinator, Ernesto La Mattina of Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A and project partner Marko Mihalič of the Institute for Corporative Security Studies, ARIEN contributed as an expert to the two-day Technology Foresight Workshop hosted in Lisbon by the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), on 11 and 12 February 2026. The event brought together specialists and institutional representatives to examine emerging technologies, supply-side disruption, and Europe's preparedness for evolving drug market risks.



Drawing from real-world pilots, field validation, and research-driven analysis, ARIEN provided insights grounded in operational realities. Bridging innovation and practice is essential to ensure that strategic foresight discussions translate into implementable, field-ready solutions.



The workshop focused on forward-looking themes, including the impact of emerging technologies on illicit drug production and trafficking; new patterns of supply-side adaptation and criminal innovation; strategic risk anticipation and scenario development; and strengthening Europe's collective response capacity.

ARIEN remains committed to contributing research-driven, field-informed expertise to strategic European discussions, ensuring that

Artificial Intelligence is developed and deployed in ways that are operationally effective, legally compliant, and aligned with EU values.



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# THE ARIEN PROJECT IS REFERENCED IN THE ENACT COUNTRY PROFILE – ITALY REPORT

The ARIEN Project has been highlighted in the FCT Research and Innovation Landscape – Country Profile: Italy, a report published by the ENACT network analysing the participation of Italian organisations in Horizon Europe Cluster 3 – Civil Security for Society, particularly in the area of Fight against Crime and Terrorism (FCT).

The report provides an overview of the Italian research and innovation ecosystem in the security domain, examining policy priorities, technological capabilities, and the role of key stakeholders involved in EU-funded projects.

Within the Horizon Europe FCT domain, the report highlights that Italian entities participate in 25 signed grants with an average EU contribution of over €700,000 per project, securing more than €17.5 million in total EU funding. These figures place Italy among the most influential contributors to European security research, ranking second in total net EU contribution within the analysed dataset.

The inclusion of ARIEN in the ENACT Country Profile highlights the project's role within the wider European security research ecosystem and reflects the importance of collaborative research initiatives in addressing complex and transnational threats.

By bringing together partners from across Europe and combining technological innovation with criminological and operational expertise, ARIEN contributes to the development of new tools and knowledge that support the fight against illicit drug production and trafficking.



# ARIEN AT THE TESSERA SECOND ONLINE WORKSHOP

On February 17th, the second online workshop of the TESSERA project took place.

The workshop highlighted key developments in the project regarding the creation of a European Security Data Space for Innovation including architectures, governance mechanisms and interoperability.

Particular attention was given to defining requirements to ensure the interoperability and shareability of heterogeneous datasets.

Overall the event confirmed once again the relevance of collaborative approaches in improving the mapping, accessibility, and usability of security-oriented datasets to support research and innovation in the security domain.

ARIEN was pleased to take part in the workshop, reflecting the strong collaboration that is growing between the two projects and their shared thematic interests.



# PROJECT SYNERGIES



**TESSERA**

**TESSERA** supports the preparatory work for the creation of high-quality, large-scale, trusted and shareable datasets to enable the European Security Data Space for Innovation (EU SDSI). The project focuses on defining the requirements for interoperability and secure sharing of heterogeneous datasets while ensuring compliance with privacy, fundamental rights and EU values. TESSERA will also design the architecture of the national data components that will connect to the future EU Security Data Space, including mechanisms for user management, data access and data exchange.

Building on existing initiatives and engaging key stakeholders such as EU agencies, law enforcement authorities, industry and research organisations, TESSERA aims to foster trusted data ecosystems that support the development and validation of AI-driven solutions for security. By promoting data reuse, common standards and interoperable infrastructures across EU Member States, the project will help strengthen Europe's security capabilities, support innovation in law enforcement technologies and reinforce European data sovereignty.

Follow TESSERA for updates.



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**ARMADILLO** is an innovative forensic technology project designed to address the growing challenge of GHB-facilitated crimes, including drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA). Because GHB is colorless, odorless and rapidly metabolized, it is extremely difficult to detect with traditional forensic methods. ARMADILLO aims to overcome these limitations by developing advanced tools that allow rapid, accurate and reliable detection of GHB in beverages and bodily fluids, both at crime scenes and in forensic laboratories.

The project integrates portable detection technologies, advanced optical spectroscopy (including SERS and fluorescence techniques), electrochemical sensing, and AI-driven data analysis to provide high-quality forensic evidence that is legally admissible. In addition, ARMADILLO develops a digital forensic platform that supports data analysis, risk assessment, and information sharing between law enforcement agencies and forensic institutions.

Through real-world pilot demonstrations across multiple European countries, ARMADILLO will validate its technologies and promote standardized forensic workflows. By combining innovative detection tools, artificial intelligence and data-driven forensic intelligence, the project aims to strengthen investigative capabilities, support law enforcement authorities, and ultimately enhance public safety and the prevention of drug-facilitated crimes across Europe.

Follow ARMADILLO for updates.



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