

INTERPOL's Capacity for Improvement: An Encouraging Word

By [Michelle A. Estlund](#) on August 05, 2011

Still on the topic of INTERPOL's ability and need for improvement of its information processing methods and internal accountability, today's post addresses INTERPOL's own discussions of those issues.

While there are certainly many valid points to be made regarding the frustrating experience that many have while dealing with INTERPOL, there is also evidence that INTERPOL is aware of the need for continual improvements in its processing of Red Notice requests. It also takes steps, slower than some may like, towards making those improvements.

In his 2010 speech to INTERPOL's General Assembly, Billy Hawkes, the Chairman of the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files candidly discussed the issue of accountability, as well as the need for an increased level of dedication to international human rights standards. Towards the issue of accountability, he stated:

The Commission represents the Organisation's commitment to the outside world that it is willing to be accountable to an independent body for the manner in which it deals with the sensitive information entrusted to it. . .

Regarding the frequently raised question of respect for human rights, he proposed an idea:

The Organisation's commitment to international human rights standards would be further strengthened by the inscription of the Organisation's Constitution with the United Nations, a proposal that the Commission fully supports.

Similar issues were discussed by the former Chairman, Peter Hustinx, in his [2007 speech](#) of the same nature. Additionally, Chairman Hustinx raised other issues. He raised the rather uncomfortable fact that, in the Commission's observation, there appeared to be an "almost systematic" practice of INTERPOL assessing the accuracy and relevance of information in *favor* of NCBs (National Central Bureaus).

These two very brief examples indicate a willingness to effect change, at least from within the CCF. They also indicate what must be more than a little tension between the CCF and INTERPOL itself, which is probably healthy given their respective roles.

INTERPOL is capable of making changes to allow for transparency, fairness, and due process. We also know that it is aware of the need for those changes. Whether it will continue to make real progress towards those goals, well, time will tell.

As always, comments and thoughts are welcomed.