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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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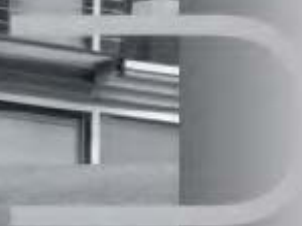
NOTE

From : Europol
To : Multidisciplinary Group on Organised Crime (MDG)
Subject : EU Organised Threat Assessment 2008 (OCTA)

Delegations will find attached the EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2008 (OCTA).

OCCTA

EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2008



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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to present the third European Union Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA). The OCTA is a core product of the intelligence-led law enforcement concept and its drafting is one of Europol's top priorities.

The OCTA is, as its name suggests, a threat assessment of current and expected new trends in organised crime (OC) across the EU. The assessment is based upon existing knowledge and expertise and it is drawn up in order to enable decision-makers to take the appropriate action to counter the anticipated threat.

The OCTA marks a new approach to the way in which Europol and the Member States operate and it is a first step to change of paradigm in policing. The OCTA fits in firmly with the aim of 'The Hague Programme' to provide a forward-looking approach to fight OC in a more proactive than re-active manner. The OCTA allows the EU to develop complementary measures to countering OC, linking those at the ministerial and political levels with those of practitioners and law enforcement agencies who operate at the front line.

The OCTA as a tool, and the ensuing Council Conclusions based on the OCTA from 2006 and 2007, have already had a significant impact on the law enforcement community throughout Europe in terms of practices and priorities. This is the case, for instance, through the European Police Chief Task Force (EPCTF/COSPOL) framework at the common EU level, the Baltic Sea Task Force, the Operational Inter-organisational Action Plan to Fight Human Trafficking in Greece (ILAEIRA), the Maritime analysis and operations centre – narcotics (MAOC-N) in Lisbon, at Europol and within the individual Member States.

A great number of people and various organisations have contributed to the production of the 2008 OCTA. This deserves to be recognised. All Member States have provided their respective contributions. Valuable contributions have also been received from other institutions at the EU-level such as ECB, EMCDDA, Eurojust, Frontex and OLAF. Additionally, a number of third parties provided valuable assistance in building up the picture of OC as it impacts upon the EU.

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We are grateful to our law enforcement partners in Canada, Colombia, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and the US as well as to ICPO/Interpol and SECI for their co-operation. The novel approach taken in producing this work has also seen consultation with a number of partners from the private sector and academia and their co-operation has added significant value to the OCTA. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the staff of Europol deserve recognition for their efforts to produce this document. I appreciate and thank them for their on-going efforts in the production and development of this significant and pioneering work.

The 2008 OCTA will be another important step to raise the level of co-operation between various competent authorities in the Member States as well as with the EU institutions and agencies as such. This will contribute to further develop the common space of freedom, security and justice in the European Union.

Max-Peter Ratzel
Director of Europol

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1. INTRODUCTION

In response to 'The Hague Programme', the first OCTA was introduced and later endorsed by the Council during their meeting on 1-2 June 2006. The OCTA, and the ensuing Council Conclusions based on the OCTA from 2006 and 2007, have already had a significant impact on law enforcement work throughout Europe. This third OCTA will provide an important platform for the evaluation of the Council Conclusions of 2006 and 2007, and also for the follow-up to The Hague Programme which will be re-visited in 2009.

The OCTA covers the EU. However, it cannot be neglected that Europe, due to its geography and its cultural, social and historical differences, is not a homogeneous structure and so may also require a regional priority setting. Therefore, although the European dimension is the prime focus, the OCTA also accounts for regional divergences. In order to enhance the understanding of events within the EU, consideration of the international arena is at times necessary.

To allow comparisons in this area, creating a ranking of OC groups and phenomena is a major challenge, not only for methodological reasons. Nevertheless, the OCTA uses indicators in different areas which, if evaluated together, will identify the threat level from a European perspective. The OCTA does not reflect on all existing OC groups or crime types, but the application of specific criteria allows for a pre-selection of the most relevant criminal phenomena.

To support decision-makers in the best possible way, the OCTA provides a well-targeted qualitative assessment of the threat from OC. The OCTA is based on a multi-source approach, including law enforcement and non-law enforcement contributions. These include various European agencies as well as the private sector. A specific emphasis is put on elaborating the benefits of an intensified public-private partnership. The OCTA helps to close the gap between strategic findings and operational activities. The OCTA helps to identify the highest priorities, which will then be effectively tackled with the appropriate law enforcement instruments. The OCTA suggests strategic priorities, but it needs to be realised that the OCTA itself is not detailed enough to pinpoint specific criminal investigations. The 2008 OCTA does not provide specific recommendations, as this year is focused on the EU-wide implementation of earlier OCTA Council Conclusions unless there is an urgent need for action requiring exceptionally the setting of new priorities.

The structure of the 2008 OCTA follows the general conceptual model for the analysis, starting with an assessment of the OC groups, followed by an analysis of the criminal markets and ending with an assessment of the regional dimension of OC impacting on the EU.

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The OCTA is always being enhanced. Methodological and other issues are continuously being addressed in close co-operation with the Member States to allow for the further enhancement of the OCTA. The methodology and procedures for its completion have been amended, and this has had a positive result in terms of quality of the contributions submitted to the report and the way in which the contributions are processed and analysed. Overall, the changes which have been introduced have all contributed to enhancing the quality of the OCTA.

The OCTA does not cover terrorism or terrorist networks. These issues are touched upon when they are relevant for the study of OC, however due to the particularities involved in the field of terrorism, the area is being covered as a separate issue.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The functionalities and strategic interests of a group and the relevant criminal markets in many cases override ethnicity as a defining factor of OC. Thus an OC group typology based on structural and functional features has been adopted in the OCTA. The typology helps to identify specific types of OC groups in any Member State and also to assess their most threatening aspects.

OC groups can be analysed through a combination of seven indicators that are the international dimension, group structure, use of legitimate business structures, specialisation, influence, use of violence and counter-measures. The strategic centre of gravity can be seen as a synthesis of such features. OC groups can be classified as non-EU-based groups, intermediary situations or EU-based groups depending on the location of their centre of gravity.

Non-EU-based groups pertain to criminal organisations that have a strong international dimension so that in most cases both leaders and assets of the group are located outside the EU. In most cases only cells of the “mother” group are present in the EU. The intermediary situations comprise two main categories; second generation groups, and groups combining aspects of both non-EU-based and EU-based groups. The defining factor in the first category is the assimilation process through which the groups become more ingrained in the societies of their countries of activity. In the latter category groups combine the insulating features of non-EU-based groups with the level of presence in the EU of EU-based groups. Finally, EU-based groups refer to groups that have both their leaders and at least a substantial part of their assets inside the EU.

On the whole the majority of the groups reported by the Member States are located between pure EU-based and non-EU-based groups. Within this framework, the second generation development is an important aspect to be taken into consideration by law enforcement.

With regard to crime areas, the ones highlighted in the OCTA Council Conclusions of June 2007 are targeted in this threat assessment.

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Concerning drugs trafficking, the continuing expansion of opium production in Afghanistan will probably cause a higher purity and lead to new trafficking routes as well as to an expansion of existing markets towards China, India and Central Asia. The majority of heroin is still transported via different branches of the Balkan route, but a considerable amount is trafficked via the Northern Black Sea route which is gaining in importance. Heroin trafficking towards and within the EU continues to be dominated by Turkish OC groups. The increasing role of Pakistanis is also noteworthy.

Large scale cocaine importation into the EU is dominated by Colombian OC groups. In general, West Africa is increasingly gaining in importance as a transshipment zone. In the future, there might be an increase in cocaine trafficking towards the EU because of a growing attractiveness in comparison with the US market.

Dutch and, to a lesser extent, Belgian OC groups still dominate the major production of synthetic drugs in the EU. However, large scale production continues to spread both within the EU and at a global level. It is also expected that the accession of Bulgaria and Romania will influence the EU market.

Moroccan OC groups will continue to consolidate their position in the cannabis market with the aim of taking care of all phases from source to destination in countries.

Indoor cultivation of cannabis herb is expanding. The actual growing of cannabis is sometimes outsourced to labourers who are forced to employ their skills to grow it.

Concerning trafficking in human beings (THB) and facilitation of illegal immigration, certain OC groups, such as Romanian, Polish and Lithuanian ones, will continue to profit from their being EU-based and being able to recruit human beings not only from the Member States where they are centred but also from outside the EU. With specific reference to THB for sexual exploitation, other OC groups, such as indigenous and ethnic Albanian ones, will continue to try to keep their market position also exploiting human beings trafficked by the aforementioned OC groups.

The African continent is an increasing key source and transit area for smuggled or trafficked people. While other nationalities from Asia are emerging in these criminal fields, ongoing changes in migratory flows from China may generate an increase in the exploitation of forced labour and lead to an expansion to new forms of exploitation such as for sexual purposes that are more likely to lead to contacts and visibility beyond the limits of the Chinese community.

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Concerning the Black Sea region, in the near future, Bulgaria and Romania will most probably experience an increase in facilitated illegal immigration of nationals from countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States but also from South West Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

In the end, it must be stressed that OC might profit from illegal immigrants also when they have not been trafficked into the EU. This can include the provision of services, exploitation or involvement in criminal activities. Developments in this direction, implying an increasing control by OC over the illegal immigrants is highly threatening.

Fraud has a far-reaching impact on society as a whole that surpasses its direct financial implications. Fraud supports financially many threatening forms of OC and possibly also terrorism or extremism. It is in many cases the latch that OC can use to penetrate society and economy almost unnoticed. This penetration can have far-reaching implications especially when it is combined with the use of corruption to influence important political and economic decision-making locally, regionally and nationally. The most threatening aspect of fraud is that it can be used by OC to overtake various sectors from construction to transport aided by cumulative fraudulent practices and subsequent lower prices offered by OC-related businesses.

Currency counterfeiting, and in particular that of the Euro, is reported throughout the EU. The countries most affected during the first ten months of 2007 were France, Italy and Spain, followed by Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and Belgium. Overall, currency counterfeiting is characterised by a strict distribution of tasks between producers, middlemen and distributors, in some cases controlled or, more often than not, tolerated by Mafia-type Italian OC – in particular Camorra – and OC groups from Lithuania, Bulgaria, Germany and Poland. Criminals from the itinerant community are among the main distributors in France and Spain.

The threat posed by document counterfeiting is directly proportional to the crime it facilitates. The limitless variety of official or semi-official documents existing throughout the world, combined with the ever-increasing movement of people and goods across real and virtual borders, hampers efficient controls and facilitates illegal operations. The threat deriving from document counterfeiting is therefore to be considered as very serious.

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Commodity counterfeiting is a crime which is being given increasing attention. All Member States are affected by it, and the emerging threat is the increasing infiltration of counterfeit goods into the legitimate retail sector. Social tolerance and acceptance is a notable facilitating factor that is coupled with a parallel legal tolerance. The sectors most threatened by commodity counterfeiting and intellectual property right fraud are health and safety, economy, innovation (scientific and technological) and employment.

In general, the main OC groups are transnational, multi-ethnic and poly-crime oriented, and they can offer an ample variety of products and services. This wider dimension may give them the possibility to run the whole production and distribution processes of entire criminal markets, optimising their profits and cutting out local and minor OC groups, which will be forced to resort to other or limited criminal activities. That could lead to a harsher impact on the territory by local OC groups, while major international OC groups may increase their revenues and infiltrate more and more the commercial, economic and social sectors, thus posing a greater, more powerful threat. Although the European dimension is the prime focus of the OCTA, it also accounts for regional differences.

Concerning the **North-West region**, specific particularities include the major transport infrastructures, different tax regimes, and a flourishing economy.

Well established ethnic communities of reference living in this region - such as the Turkish, Colombian, Chinese and Moroccan ones – and the geographical proximity to various Member States can also be exploited. The latter factor gives opportunities in particular to itinerant criminal groups involved in burglaries.

In addition, the North-West region has also essential cultural and historical links with different regions of the world.

An important feature of the **North-East region** is the existence of borders between the EU and Russia that make law enforcement co-operation lengthy and cumbersome.

Due to the relatively strong representation of EU-based oriented clusters in the North-East region, it can be suggested that non-EU-based groups need to either co-operate with local structures or evolve into intermediary situations.

The transformation of OC groups in the region from purely traditional or violent groups into more sophisticated groups that are also involved in economic crime and fraud is a generally worrying development.

Migration from Lithuania and Poland to Western Europe could strengthen the role of Lithuanian and Polish OC groups in the destination markets.

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Criminal activities shaping the **South-West region** are strictly linked with historical, cultural and geographic connections with Latin America and North-West Africa.

This is reflected in the composition of the OC groups and in the activities of Latin American street gangs. Nevertheless, local criminals maintain a central role in cocaine trafficking through the South-West region. In addition, EU citizens from other Member States are significantly represented among criminals dealing with cocaine trafficking and this is an indicator pointing to local activities of OC groups based outside the South-West region.

The Iberian Peninsula is still a crucial crossroad for cocaine, but West Africa is increasingly used as transit point. This growing role can create a context in which the Iberian Peninsula or OC groups active there can be increasingly bypassed by flows supplying directly the Member States.

Also the flow of illegal immigrants and victims of THB is influenced by the geographical proximity with North-West Africa and historical links with it and Latin America. In addition, the international human smuggling networks use Moroccan OC in the final phase of the process, to smuggle immigrants also from the Middle East and Asia into the EU.

Although time has passed, and tremendous progress has been made in most of **South-East Europe**, in several countries a 'political-business-criminal nexus' still remains, if not in full force then at least in part, and is a main strength of southeast European OC groups.

The strategic control of the Balkan route is another significant strength. In fact, all transnational OC groups who need to utilise the Balkan route have to find an agreement with Balkan OC groups, which gain a double benefit from their position of advantage: a share in the profits, and the possibility to establish high-level criminal alliances through which they can attain new markets and get involved in new types of crime.

The criminal threat to South-East Europe is not limited to domestic OC groups. The Balkan route and the privatisation process, combined with the recent accession of many South-East European countries to the EU, have raised the attention of several EU and non-EU OC groups.

With regard to the dynamic relationship between the regions of Europe, North-West, North-East, South-West, South-East and Southern criminal hubs can be identified.

The North-West criminal hub revolves around criminals and OC groups active in the area approximating to the Netherlands and Belgium.

It is a major drugs supplier for the Western part of the EU. Its influence extends to the Nordic countries, especially with reference to cocaine and hashish, and basically all EU and further for synthetic drugs.

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The North-West hub is likely to keep its importance, because the dominance of its infrastructure and its central position within the richest part of the EU are factors that are not going to change in the near future.

Criminal groups active in **the North-East criminal hub**, which is located in the Baltic countries, work as a bridge between criminals operating, in particular, in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and the EU criminal environment.

They look both east for supply of heroin, precursors, cigarettes, illegal immigrants and THB victims, and west for destination markets. They also look eastward for another important destination market where they can traffic ecstasy, cocaine, cannabis products and counterfeit goods from Asia. Although the role of OC groups from other Baltic countries should not be underestimated, a central role seems to emerge for Lithuania and Lithuanian OC whose activities are increasing at the international level.

Concerning the **South-West criminal hub**, developments in the cocaine trafficking geography and the significant migratory flows pressing on the Iberian southern borders and originating from West Africa and beyond might weaken the importance of Spanish and Portuguese links with South America. Focus is shifting towards North-West Africa that could also increasingly attract flows from the east and not only from the Atlantic side.

This development may facilitate direct provision, for example, by French criminals. In addition, the potential for the development of African networks in supplying Member States' markets directly from Africa must not be underestimated.

The Iberian Peninsula is likely to maintain its level of importance in cannabis trafficking. Moroccan OC groups will consolidate their position and could expand into the cocaine field. Synthetic drugs trafficking to North Africa is another attractive opportunity for them.

The recent eastward expansion of the EU borders to the Black Sea could alter the current equilibrium and is contributing to the establishment of a new, **South-East criminal hub** in this area. National borders lacking sufficient protection and inexpensive waterways, connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and the heart of Western Europe, naturally make it very attractive for illegal shipments.

A considerable and increasing amount of heroin is channelled via the Black Sea route. A significant use of the territories of Ukraine and Russia to direct heroin toward the EU is pointing to a shift of the Balkan route. In this context, Romania and Ukraine are expected to gain further importance as transit and storage countries.

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With regard to Romania, the Constanta harbour could be a significant vulnerability. For example, cocaine trafficking from South America and an increase in counterfeit goods, especially textiles from China, are already reported.

The evolving situation in the Black Sea region with reference to facilitation of illegal immigration and THB has already been stressed.

The emergence of the South-East criminal hub may impact negatively on the North-East one and on the role of the Iberian Peninsula within the South-West hub, also taking into consideration that the focus of the later seems to be moving towards West Africa.

Concerning the **Southern criminal hub**, a better understanding is needed about the involvement of certain OC groups based in Italy in criminal activities in other Member States.

In general, criminal groups based in Italy have important links in other Member States in both the western part of the EU and its eastern part. Such links reach also Switzerland, the United States, Canada and Australia.

The involvement of certain Italian OC groups in the counterfeiting sector, also through co-operation with Chinese organised crime, and in cigarette smuggling are other indicators confirming the importance of the Southern hub. It is primarily based on the characteristics of the main OC groups that are active there together with their capability to operate worldwide and to create advantageous synergies with other OC groups located inside or outside the EU. These factors are most likely not going to change in the near future.

In the end, **the main threats from OC** are represented by the combinations of criminal group types and criminal markets shaping the above mentioned criminal hubs. Priorities in making use of the available international co-operation instruments should be fixed in accordance to these findings.

This calls for the alignment of national priorities based on a transnational threat assessment.

International co-operation should not be interpreted only as providing assistance to an investigation owned by and in the interest of another Member State. International co-operation must also, and more importantly, be interpreted as a joint investigative activity with common objectives and adequate priorities and resources.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The methodology for the OCTA¹ highlights key aspects in the following areas: the conceptual model; the collection and collation of the information, including choices made and selection criteria; the evaluation of the information, especially with regards to information from open sources and public partners, and the assessment of the information.

The conceptual model for the OCTA is based on the work pursued during the Swedish and Belgian Presidencies resulting in Crimorg 133, 2001.² The conceptual model proposed by the Belgian Presidency is shown in the next page.

The OCTA methodology is in line with this conceptual model. It views OC as organisations being active on both illicit and licit markets and using countermeasures to be able to continue their activities. Crimorg 133 lists many possible methodologies to use, as shown in the figure below, including PEST analysis³, network analysis, market scans and analysis of methods.

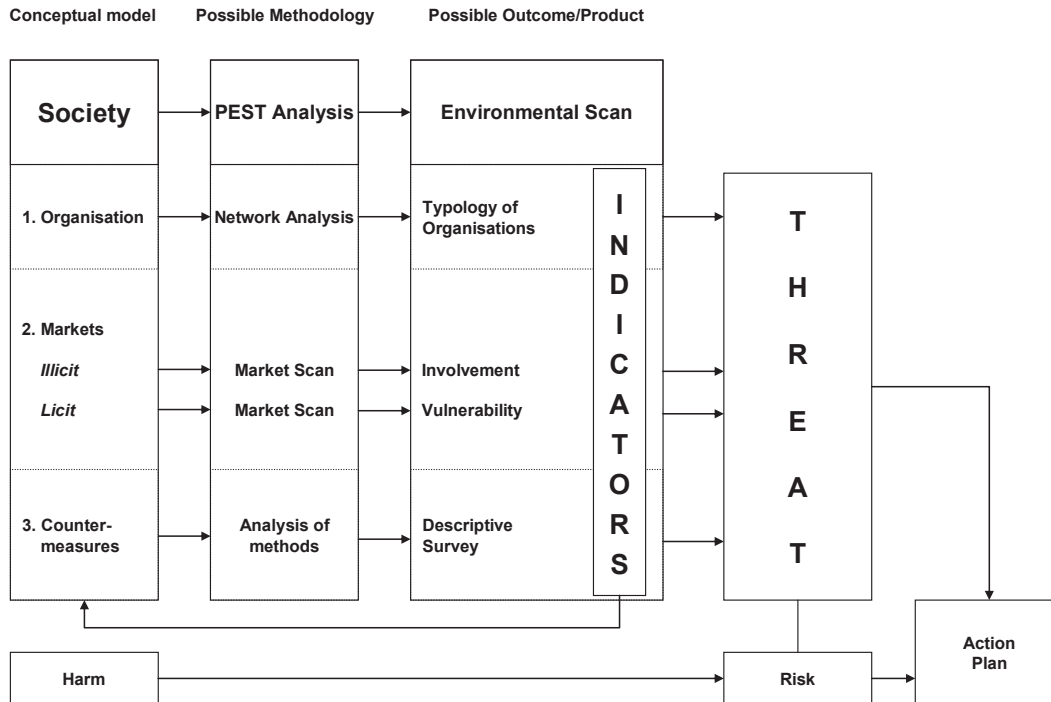
The OCTA particularly looks at certain features of the model, asking one key question: what does it take for an OC group to be successful without being caught? In formal terms, it tries to study in detail OC groups from the perspective of their efficiency and durability, therefore widening the scope to involve, for instance, market conditions whilst keeping focus on the relationship between OC and law enforcement. With such an organisational focus in mind, the OCTA also studies OC counter-measures. Furthermore, the OCTA provides detail about markets in which OC is active, primarily illicit markets. Licit markets are only studied in an in-direct way to provide details about facilitating factors or vulnerabilities which OC groups exploit for their criminal purposes. The OCTA also adds a regional approach to its analysis, allowing for a PEST analysis to be performed in key geographical regions.

The OCTA is not in the position to address all the aspects of the conceptual model as described in Crimorg 133, nor is it the intention that it should. There are two main caveats.

Firstly, the OCTA is a threat assessment. Even if there is a debate going on about exactly what this entails, in OCTA terms this means that focus is primarily placed on the OC groups and then on their criminal activities. Market scans of licit sectors are performed when applicable to the facilitating factors used for the analysis. Counter-measures are integrated in the indicators about the OC groups. In general terms, risk and harm are not main components of the threat assessment. However, such aspects are addressed when needed, especially when addressing vulnerabilities.

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Secondly, similar to Crimorg 133, the OCTA fulfils a clearly defined function: it is there to support political and law enforcement decision-makers. That is, the OCTA has a very clear law enforcement focus. The aim is to enable the dismantling or at least disruption of the activities of the OC groups. This puts the OC groups in focus which, to a certain extent, differs from the approach outlined in Crimorg 133.



The outline of the OCTA has changed slightly, reflecting the development in its methodology and the experiences gained from the production of the first OCTA reports. To live up to the expectations, it has been decided to emphasise the overall assessments in the sections on OC groups and crime markets rather than to look into their component parts as was the case in the 2006 and 2007 OCTA reports. The detailed individual analysis of the seven key indicators and the six facilitating factors is not part of the 2008 OCTA. Instead, the summary discussions about them bring to light these issues and room is made available for more in-depth discussions about and assessments of both the OC groups and crime areas, of course from the same analytical perspective. Moreover, the regional section is further strengthened. Thus, the detailed assessments of the key areas and the facilitating factors are drawn together into discussions about the OC groups themselves and the horizontal dimension of the criminal markets respectively; and the regional dimension is expanded upon.

3.2. Collection and collation

On the basis of the experience gained in drafting the OCTA in 2006 and 2007, the collection process has been fine-tuned. This had been foreseen as a crucial step in the continuous improvement which is a key feature of this on-going process.

The collection for the 2008 OCTA is based on three questionnaires. The first one addresses single OC groups and the second one is about single criminal activities. A third questionnaire has been developed for a specific criminal activity: money laundering. As for the 2007 OCTA, there is more focus on qualitative rather than quantitative aspects. This double perspective (criminal groups and criminal activities) is necessary to put into focus the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of OC in the EU.

The main functions of the questionnaire are:

- To provide a context for a better assessment of the most threatening OC groups that are reported in the 'criminal groups' part of the Member State questionnaire and their criminal activities.
- To supply information that, combined with details of the most threatening criminal groups, allows for the development of the regional section of the OCTA.
- To establish the evolution of certain criminal markets (mandatory contributions) and provide warnings about phenomena that are assessed as particularly threatening by certain Member States (spontaneous contributions).

Questions are as general and open as possible to give the Member States the opportunity to provide as much information as possible on a given topic. In order to ensure a proper level of comparability, the Member States were requested to follow detailed instructions explaining what was expected.

3.3. Analysis process concerning Member State data

Initially, much of the data provided by the Member States was inserted and collated in a common database and relevant associations between the variables (indicators) were investigated (for example, is there any correlation between the use of corruption and a specific variant of the international dimension and what does the possible correlation mean?). The quantitative content analysis was primarily based on information from the Members States, with the understanding that the pre-selection of cases performed by the Member States presents an assessment of the overall threatening manifestations of the OC groups reported upon.

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The outcome of this quantitative phase was the starting point for the qualitative analysis based on, first of all, the in-depth use of the content of the Member State contributions. It must be stressed that the OCTA is mainly a qualitative assessment where quantitative steps are meant to provide hints or some support to the analysts rather than forming the backbone of the analysis.

Based on this process, where each key indicator with regard to the OC groups was analysed to identify its most important manifestations and links with other key indicators. In addition, an empirical typology was created, on the basis of these indicators and the dynamic relationship between them. This forms the analytical backbone of the OC groups typologies used in the 2008 OCTA.

For this purpose data on 341 OC groups reported by the Member States was used. 30 groups were discarded due to only partial data or failure to qualify with the OC group criteria. All seven indicators were introduced to the typology but the defining one is the international dimension in relation to where the leaders and assets of the group are located. The typology is not based on a statistical approach but is built and used from an empirical perspective to support the qualitative findings. The defining factor of the categorisation is the functional dimensions of the groups.

In phase two, vulnerabilities, or, from the point of view of the criminals, future crime opportunities were identified by evaluating the facilitating factors. Again, these were ordered so that important aspects could be identified. As for the indicators, the facilitating factors were outlined in terms of internal important manifestations and the dynamic relationship between them. This forms the analytical backbone of the assessment of the criminal markets used in the 2008 OCTA.

Finally, the assessment is enriched by using other sources: public, private partnership (PPP) data, information and reports from within Europol, open source material and the regional studies conducted by the OCTA team, to name a few. The conclusions of the integrated approach are presented at the end of the OCTA in relation to the regions. In this way the criminals and the crimes were tested against a realistic context, the regions, and their validity can be assessed.

The relationship between the OC group indicators and criminal market facilitating factors outlined in such a regional context is key to the overall assessment of OC in the EU. Here, it was possible to highlight, for instance, the relationship between particular group structures and crime types and the effects in a specific geographical context.

3.4. Assessment

The overall assessments in the OCTA are based on two complementary tools: PEST and SWOT analysis. To support a threat analysis, the use of PEST and SWOT analysis is based on two simple premises:

- First, subjects of interest to law enforcement should be moving in contexts which are best analysed through the study of basic political, economic, social and technological circumstances (PEST).
- Second, they are best assessed in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, together with the opportunities and threats they are presented with on a certain 'market' (SWOT).

PEST and SWOT analysis introduce little analytical news, but enable a more well-structured approach, whilst providing a higher level of transparency.

PEST analysis aims at identifying overall patterns and trends, to enable the study of change and stability in various criminals or phenomena. PEST provides the context having an effect on the overall threat or risk assessment. Conversely, it pinpoints the ones which have an effect on the overall context. The impact of the PEST analysis increases in a decision-making model the closer to the decision-making point it gets. This is natural, since the decision-makers of course have to be responsive to, above all, the political dimension of a certain decision-making situation.

For practical purposes, the OCTA aims at pin-pointing indicators which are relevant to the fight against OC impacting on the EU. It therefore emphasises events with close proximity both in terms of time, space and theme and de-emphasises issues far away (again with regard to space, time and theme). For instance, neighbouring regions to the EU are often at the centre of the analytical attention where it is known (or where there are good reasons to believe) that OC impacts on the EU now or will do so in the near future.

SWOT analysis aim at presenting important variables with regard to criminals or criminal markets in a threat analysis and thus enable an analysis of their effects on future activities. Similar to PEST analysis, SWOT analysis allows the analyst to isolate a number of indicators deemed important for one or more types of crime, criminals or criminal markets. Fundamentally, it too initially works as an analytical selection mechanism or a prism more than as an assessment tool.

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Both PEST and SWOT analysis aim at establishing patterns and trends with regard to criminals (SW), crimes and criminal markets (OT) or the criminal context (PEST). Depending on the choice of time-line for the assessment, that is how far it is supposed to look into the future, some indicators are more important than others. Day-to-day stock market fluctuations only have a marginal importance if a five-year perspective is employed. Conversely, a five-year perspective introducing for instance the effects of future enlargements of the EU is not suitable with a six-month perspective in mind.

The OCTA has a future-oriented perspective looking forward some three to five years. One year is too short to be really useful for strategic planning purposes at the EU level and in the Member States, six or seven years is often too long. In the end, a high degree of initial, individual analytical freedom is necessary in the choice of PEST and SWOT indicators. However, the final analysis must be based on a common set of indicators; otherwise analytical clarity and coherence will be lost.

3.5. Evaluation of information

The OCTA reflects a holistic approach to sources. This does not mean that all available sources are used, but rather that none is immediately discarded. The exception to this rule is evidently unreliable sources, tabloid press articles or similar. The main sources for the OCTA are the reports from the Member States, third states, Europol, EU agencies such as ECB, EMCDDA, Eurojust, Frontex and OLAF and law enforcement agencies such as Interpol, together with government reports, reports from IGOs and NGOs, and scientific studies. Contacts with external experts are also invaluable, for instance scientists, government officials and other specialists. Conference records, minutes from meetings and internal reports are also used when available.

Such a wide variety of sources to draw upon helps to ensure the highest quality of the OCTA by ensuring a broader understanding of OC and enhancing the reliability of the information. Whenever possible and necessary to maintain a high quality in the information used, sources are cross-checked with one another. Such cross-checking is made to ensure factual consistency and avoid factual errors. Biases in reporting are avoided by using complementary sources supporting the factual reporting on a particular issue. By focusing on the factual aspects of the reports which are used, the analyst can avoid tilted judgements and assessments from them. In methodological terms, this ensures a higher degree of reliability and validity of the information used.

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However, at times reporting from complementary sources is not readily available. When this is the case, confirmation is sought from partners in the OCTA process, mainly the Member States; the issue is highlighted as tentative, or the reporting is disregarded.

When reference is made to a particular source or combination of sources, it is not always the case that the assessment draws literally on what is stated in the reference material. The material to which a reference is made many times forms the basis for the assessment but not the assessment itself. This is of course the meaning of analysis, where knowledge is formed which goes beyond what was already known.

4. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE OC GROUPS

OC groups can be assessed by using a typology⁴ based on the OCTA indicators. This typology helps to identify specific types of OC groups in any Member State and also to assess their most threatening aspects. The typology is not a scientific statistical exercise but is created to evaluate and showcase functional differences in the OC groups.

In the 2007 OCTA, much of the analysis was focused on assessing the seven individual indicators related to the OC groups, that is:

1. The international dimension;
2. Group structures;
3. Use of legitimate business structures;
4. Specialisation;
5. Influence;
6. Use of violence;
7. Counter-measures.

This focus is built upon in the 2008 OCTA by a more detailed exemplification with the same analytical perspective of the types presented in the 2007 OCTA.

Based on the indicators, the OC groups reported by the Member States can roughly be divided into three main categories. These are traditionally indigenous OC groups or *EU-based groups*; traditionally non-indigenous or *non-EU-based groups*; and finally the *intermediary situations* including both second generation OC groups and groups that combine aspects of both non-EU and EU-based groups.

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A way of visualising the main types is represented below in Figure 1. The development of the groups along the line of the strategic centre of gravity takes into consideration how the international dimension is used by the group, what structural indications can be discerned and whether there are any apparent changes in these, where the groups' leaders and assets are placed, where and how effectively they use corruption and violence, what are the groups' capabilities to exploit legal business structures, and how well and for which specific purposes they exploit specialists and countermeasures. Another factor in defining the groups' strategic centre of gravity is to consider whether and how the groups hinge on an ethnic community of reference to facilitate their criminal activities.

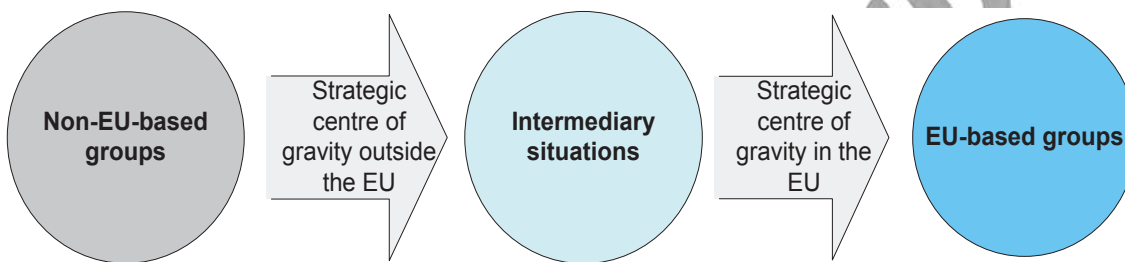


Figure 1: Types of OC groups in relation to their strategic centre of gravity

4.1. Non-EU-based groups

Non-EU-based groups pertain to criminal organisations that have a strong international dimension so that in most cases both leaders and assets of the group are located outside the EU. These groups can be regarded as 'visitors'; in most cases only cells of the group are present and visible in the EU. Although these cells are in most cases led from outside the EU, the level of organisation of these groups inside the EU is still relatively low. Contacts with the countries of activity are kept to a minimum and the international dimension is used to its fullest extent for shielding purposes and to support the criminal activities.

This category is often represented by hierarchically organised groups. Their criminal activities are linked to the use of legal business structures as well as the use of high-level corruption against law enforcement or the judiciary, public administration and politics outside the EU. The use of violence, in most cases outside the EU, is also a strong general characteristic of this type of groups whilst the use of specialists is on a much more basic level.

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Non-EU-based groups differ from EU-based groups in one specific aspect: their strategic centre of gravity and interests are mainly outside the EU, and many groups only exploit the crime markets in the EU for profit. These groups are often so-called supplying groups; they either provide people, goods or drugs for the EU markets after which they repatriate the profits to the origin. In some cases they also take care of the final distribution, but may also leave these functions to other groups. This approach often leaves EU law enforcement in the dark of the origin and the organisers of the crime while also making it almost impossible to identify, re-trace and confiscate the criminal proceeds. There are several examples of such groups. One is a Malaysian group involved in payment card fraud in the EU. The leaders stay in Malaysia and the proceeds of fraud are handed over to middle-level members located in the EU. The group does not have links to legal business structures in the EU and it does not use corruption or influence there. Violence in the form of intimidation is used only inside the group.⁵

Another similar case is an OC group involved in facilitating illegal immigration from Albania to Greece. The leading members of the group stay in Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), while it recruits Greek members to facilitate the border-crossing from FYROM to Greece. The assets of the group are located outside Greece and it exploits the transport sector in FYROM to facilitate its criminal business. There are also indications of the ability of the group to corrupt policemen and customs officers working at the border between FYROM and Albania. The group co-ordinates the criminal market in its origin; it is also becoming involved in facilitating illegal immigration from China via FYROM into the EU.⁶

4.2. Intermediary situations

The intermediary situations are among the most interesting types of and developments in OC groups. In general they are relatively independent structures and not only cells of larger OC groups controlled from abroad. The location of the centre of gravity of these groups is to a large extent dependent on their second generation or assimilation process so that in the end the level of presence in the EU grows while the possibility to shield behind the international dimension decreases. In general these groups are developing along the lines and direction of EU-based groups.

The intermediary situations include two main types of groups, *second generation groups*⁷ and *groups combining aspects of both non-EU-based and EU-based groups*⁸.

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4.2.1. *Second generation groups*

The second generation groups are in many functional ways flanked by the non EU-based and EU-based OC groups but progressing towards the latter. The defining factor in this development is the assimilation process through which the groups become more ingrained in the societies of their countries of activity.

These groups do not form a homogenous amalgamation. Some of them are still in active contact with the mother group located in the origin country and in some cases procure goods or services from it. In a more progressed stage the group has gradually cut its ties with its mother group and rather hinges on ethnic communities present in the EU for support, cover, markets and recruitment. In the most advanced intermediary situation the group relies partly on the support of the ethnic community, but has also become more prepared to use corruption or influence, in some cases also violence, and all in all gain an enhanced access to legal structures in the EU. The group enhances its presence in the EU but simultaneously shields some of its functions behind its international dimension⁹, which guarantees it a sound insulation against law enforcement and other OC groups. There are intelligence gaps in relation to the level of ties between the second generation group and the mother group, and also in relation to how the group in this case can replace the supply of commodities.

There are indications that certain groups traditionally considered insulated outside the EU and only involved in procuring various commodities to EU-based groups are established in the EU. Examples of such groups are some Colombian OC groups which are known as suppliers of cocaine to various other OC groups that often take care of the distribution in the EU¹⁰. The leaders may reside in Colombia but senior members are located in the EU, and they often have either an EU residence permit or even citizenship. In certain cases, however, all members including the leaders are based in the EU. They also exploit the Colombian ethnic communities in the EU for recruiting new members and to disguise their drug trafficking activities providing them with a safe haven for business.¹¹ The insulation from EU law enforcement which the Colombian groups were able to exploit when operating directly from South America is to a certain extent replaced by the protective effect of an ethnic community of reference in the EU based on common language, common values, a culture of silence, etc.

For example, a Colombian-led OC group sources cocaine directly from South America and Spain into the UK. The group has direct contacts in Spain with Colombian nationals. Most of its members are resident in the UK; some are British nationals, others have indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

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The group is a horizontal group responding to business and cash flow; different persons take the lead to control consignments depending on their financial interest in it. The bulk of the criminal proceeds seem to be repatriated to South America. The group is not known to use influence but can use violence to enforce drug debts. It is, however, rare that the group acts violently.¹²

The groups featuring the strongest aspects of second generation development are some of the Chinese OC groups in the EU. These groups combine various developments that are decidedly moving them from non-EU-based groups in the direction of EU-based groups. In many cases the leading members of the Chinese OC groups are, legally or illegally, staying in the EU and are often second generation citizens of the particular Member States. Furthermore, the groups have a good and already established access to legal business structures, and they are sometimes even attempting to use influence and corruption in the EU¹³ to facilitate their criminal business. They exploit Chinese ethnic communities for various purposes ranging from extortion to employment in a variety of criminal markets.¹⁴

A significant example of this is a Chinese group active in facilitating illegal immigration from the Fujian region in China to various EU countries, including Germany. The whole criminal project is run from the Czech Republic where the leading members are often residing. The group has further subsidiaries in France and China. According to intelligence the group has founded a transport company in the Czech Republic and is establishing corruptive contacts with law enforcement in Slovakia to facilitate its criminal business. Additionally, the money flow is a good indicator of second generation development: while the assets of a non-EU-based group normally flow from destination market in the EU to the origin outside the EU, in the second generation development the opposite is true and money flows, in this case, from the hopeful future migrants via the Chinese subsidiary to the leaders located in the EU.¹⁵

4.2.2. Groups combining aspects of both non-EU-based and EU-based groups

The groups combining aspects of both non-EU-based and EU-based groups are comprised of groupings that in their criminal activities combine the insulating features of groups based outside the EU and the level of presence in the EU of indigenous groups. The centre of gravity of these groups can be described to be in every country of activity. They are as such not evolving along the lines of the second generation development.

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In most cases these groups are not independent OC groups but more accurately geographically spread networks often involved in trafficking or smuggling activities. These are often made up of several relatively independent and equal groups or cores which activate when a certain type of goods or certain nationality of people or certain country of the trajectory becomes relevant. An example of this type is a criminal network facilitating illegal immigration from Western Asia to the EU. This network consists of semi-independent cores which function in every country of the smuggling route. Leading members are residing in Greece and Turkey. The immigrants' nationalities are represented in the ethnic set-up of the OC group. The group exerts influence over civil servants in the immigrants' origin countries in order to facilitate the smuggling but is also attempting to influence the non-criminal environment including truck drivers, law enforcement and civil servants in the EU.¹⁶

Another example is a criminal network involved in trafficking in human beings (THB), facilitation of illegal immigration and drug smuggling in Germany, Poland, Ukraine, The Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and the Czech Republic. The network uses a separate group for the different phases of the overall logistics in each country of activity: a Polish group in Poland, a Dutch group in The Netherlands, etc. This way the overall criminal organisation ensures that each country of the relevant trajectory is covered by a mainly indigenous group that has all the strengths of a local group in that country, that is access to legal business structures, opportunity to use corruption and influence, and so on. Leading members of the network stay in most countries of activity.¹⁷

Additionally, a group involved in trafficking heroin from Turkey to Spain and Portugal is comprised of territorial cells located in several geographical areas. The Turkish members procure the heroin in Turkey, the Spanish members are responsible for the transport and distribution in Spain, and the Portuguese members for distribution in Portugal. Leaders of the group stay in Turkey and Spain.¹⁸

4.3. EU-based groups

EU-based groups refer to OC groups that have both their leaders and at least a substantial part of their assets inside the EU. They are in general defined by the use of legal business structures, actively employ specialists in their criminal activities and, in most cases, use corruption inside the EU against low-level representatives of law enforcement or the judiciary. However, the type and level of corruption applied by the groups varies somewhat. Although decidedly fewer groups try to use corruption on a higher level and also against public administration and the political context, these contacts do occur.

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The use of violence is in many cases not a defining characteristic of this type since the need for its use is in many cases made obsolete by the ability of EU-based groups to use other, more sophisticated and less conspicuous means to facilitate their criminal business. However, there are important exceptions to this rule; oriented clusters such as for example the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMCG)¹⁹ and some Italian mafia groups²⁰ use violence or intimidating reputation in an endemic and multifaceted manner as a counter-measure.²¹

On an organisational level EU-based groups are efficiently organised and support task diversification and specialisation. These structures are resilient in relation to the outside world. On the other hand, they are not always able to use the international dimension for effective shielding purposes, which can make them relatively vulnerable to law enforcement action. EU-based groups can comprise several structural types but current data suggests that hierarchically based groups, and certain oriented clusters are typical of this category.

Analogies to EU-based groups are among others the Italian mafia groups, OMCG, and many traditionally indigenous groups based in the EU.²² Even though modern criminal organisations often invest their assets and launder their criminal proceeds in various locations around the world and are active in numerous countries and even continents, the strategic centre of gravity of EU-based groups is still located in their origin in the EU. Even the Italian Camorra, despite its truly international ramifications, bases its existence on the 'territorial factor'; its physical presence in and control over its source in Campania²³.

An example displaying strong international contacts combined with well-established control over national territories is the Hells Angels. The criminal organisation is of truly global nature²⁴, but the strategic centre of gravity of each chapter including leaders and the majority of assets is relatively firmly located inside national borders and in the EU. An indication of the importance of control is the role of Hells Angels in some local criminal markets. For example, in the drugs market other OC groups, be they independent or supporting groups, are working for the Hells Angels in a subordinate position.²⁵

4.4. Functionality as a defining factor of OC

On the whole the majority of the groups reported by the Member States are located between pure EU-based and non-EU-based groups. This development can be explained by various factors: it is possible that many supplying groups, or non-EU-based groups, want to better safeguard their business interests in the EU and maybe also get more involved in the final phases of the supply chain, namely distribution and money laundering. They may even wish to expand their business into other criminal markets located in the EU. Originally non-indigenous OC may also regard the borderless EU as a good location to invest some of the immediate criminal proceeds and to get involved in profitable legal business structures, especially if the risk of involvement is dispersed and some parts of the overall interests of the criminal organisation are maintained outside the EU in the origin. Additional information is in any case required in order to confirm these factors.

These factors may also explain why certain non-indigenous and originally non-EU-based groups of one and the same dominant ethnicity can be located in different developmental phases. For instance, Turkish or Turkish-led groups active in various EU countries can in some cases be categorised as non-EU-based groups while in others there are clear indications of intermediary situations (both second generation development and trafficking networks combining characteristics of both EU-based and non-EU-based groups). Based on this it can be suggested that the functionalities and strategic interests of a group and the relevant criminal markets in many cases override ethnicity as a defining factor of OC.

An example of a non-EU-based Turkish group is a group involved in the illegal importation and supply of heroin into the UK. It keeps most of its assets in territories of the Republic of Cyprus over which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control and in Turkey where also its leading members are located. The interests of the criminal organisation in the EU are represented via trusted lieutenants who can also be responsible for the financing of the activities. Sometimes the leading members contact the UK brokers directly, but cash flows back to the leaders via the lieutenants. Additionally, the group can influence or intimidate a huge Turkish community in the UK and in other countries. Extreme inter- and extra-group violence is used mainly abroad.²⁶ Depicting the second generation development is a Turkish-led group trafficking heroin and cocaine to the UK. It is relatively well-established in the country of activity. The group is based in the UK and has its leaders both in the UK and in Turkey. Additionally, many members have UK passports.

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The group features also members of other ethnicities, including the ethnicity of the country of activity. It has links to legal business structures in the UK and with specialist money laundering groups in Dubai and Iran. Additionally, the group only resorts to violence on occasion.²⁷ Another second generation Turkish group is involved in THB for prostitution and in pimping in The Netherlands and Germany. The leaders of the group migrated from Turkey to Germany in their childhood. They are staying in Germany and The Netherlands facilitated by permanent German residence permits. Assets are invested both in Turkey and in Germany. The group has links with both OMCG and ethnic Albanian OC groups. There are also indications of influence being asserted by the group in the EU. One leader of the group was able to flee to Turkey before an impending arrest and bank accounts associated with the group were emptied just before investigations started.²⁸ Examples of Turkish-led trafficking networks combining aspects of both non-EU-based and EU-based groups are certain networks active in trafficking heroin from Turkey²⁹ and heroin and cocaine from India and South America³⁰ to the EU. Leaders of these networks are located both inside and outside the EU, possibly depending on the logistically most important countries along the route. Assets are invested and money transferred both in the EU and outside while proceeds of crime are often transferred back to the origin of the goods (Turkey, Colombia). Due to the complexity of some of these structures it is sometimes difficult to define whether a cell or group active in one region might be a part of a greater trafficking network operating all over the EU and outside. It is possible, for example, that a group trafficking heroin from Turkey via Portugal to Spain is part of or associated with a bigger Turkish heroin network active in Iran, Turkey, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, The Netherlands, The UK, France, Spain and Portugal.³¹

4.5. Trends and developments

According to the data contributed to the 2008 OCTA certain trends and developments in relation to OC groups can be emphasised:

- The OC environment in the EU is evolving and dynamic. Some non-EU-based groups seem to be displaying characteristics of intermediary situations while others remain relatively purely non-EU-based. Examples of the different stages of development are some Turkish, ethnic Albanian, Nigerian, Colombian and Chinese OC groups.
- Some groups in intermediary situations are increasingly featuring members from a mixed background so that several ethnicities and nationalities, including that of the countries of activity, are represented. Their leaders, probably wanting to safeguard their overall strategic interests, often reside both in the countries of activity and origin.

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- The second generation development is an important aspect to be taken into consideration by law enforcement. Some Chinese OC groups are already showcasing a significant use of legal business structures both to facilitate criminal activities but also to launder criminal proceeds and to get established in legal business. They are also prepared to use influence and corruption in the EU both in the public and private contexts. This indicates an increasing awareness of the functions of the EU societies of these groups but also reflects their specific zeal and readiness to control any aspect possibly affecting the criminal business.

5. CRIMINAL MARKETS

The first two editions of the OCTA addressed criminal markets through the study of a number of facilitating factors which in various ways have a horizontal effect on different types of crimes, namely:

1. Document forgery and identity fraud;
2. Technology as a facilitating factor
3. The misuse of the transport sector;
4. The exploitation of the financial sector;
5. Globalisation and borders.

In the 2008 OCTA, the detailed assessment of the facilitating factors themselves is built upon by a thorough analysis of crimes through the same analytical perspective. The aim is to target crime areas highlighted in the Council OCTA Conclusions of 2006 and 2007 and follow up with an assessment of the horizontal dimension of the crime markets in the EU.

The crime types addressed are:

- Drugs trafficking;
- Crimes against persons with a focus on the exploitation of illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB);
- Fraud;
- Counterfeiting, including Euro counterfeiting.

Money laundering and other crime areas as reported by the Member States will be addressed in the ensuing assessment of the horizontal dimension of the criminal markets.

5.1. Drugs trafficking

Illicit drugs comprise several drug types. Within this chapter, the main facilitating factors and indicators for cocaine, heroin, synthetic drugs and cannabis will be discussed.

Cocaine production is still under the control of Colombian, Peruvian and Bolivian OC groups. Limited central government control over parts of the countries, resistance movements, economies depending on the coca industry and high levels of corruption all contribute to the fact that local groups involved in cultivation and production are able to maintain their dominant position.³² Large scale importation into the EU is dominated by Colombian groups.³³ They profit from the historic and linguistic links with Spain but also Portugal, as well as from the long coastline of the Iberian Peninsula³⁴ and well established Colombian communities there. Colombians and Spanish nationals are used to co-operate within this drug market and recently also co-operation with Nigerian groups is frequently reported.³⁵ There might be an increase of cocaine trafficking towards the EU in the future since cocaine prices in the US are dropping, synthetic drugs gain in popularity in the US and US control against Colombians gets tougher which all obliges Colombian traffickers to look for other markets such as the EU.³⁶

Instead of direct transport towards the EU, OC groups may prefer to go via the Caribbean or recently via West Africa. The geographical position of the Caribbean,³⁷ close to cocaine producing countries, makes the region attractive for South American, West African and European OC groups as a transit point from South America to the EU.³⁸ Historical and cultural links between the Caribbean Islands and some Member States³⁹ make this area even more attractive for European OC groups.⁴⁰

West Africa is increasingly gaining in importance as a transshipment zone.⁴¹ A vast uncontrolled coastline, porous and uncontrolled borders between West African countries, poor economies, an unstable political situation and high levels of corruption all facilitates the activities of cocaine traffickers in West Africa.⁴² In addition, strong and historic ties with some Member States,⁴³ well established communities of West-African nationals in the Member States, direct and regular flights towards major European airports and possibilities to corrupt high ranking (military) airport personnel⁴⁴ allow easy further transport to the EU. However, couriers try to avoid direct flights from West Africa to Europe and diversify transport routes as much as possible by using various African countries as a departure point towards Europe.⁴⁵ Recently, Colombians also make contacts with Moroccan OC groups in order to make use of the traditional cannabis smuggling route for the further transport of cocaine from Africa into the EU.⁴⁶

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Most **heroin** is originating from Afghanistan.⁴⁷ Afghan, Iranian and Kurdish OC groups are known to be involved within the processing of heroin, which primarily takes place in Afghanistan in areas with limited governmental control where also landlords are involved in the processing of heroin.⁴⁸ Heroin trafficking towards and within the EU continues to be dominated by Turkish OC groups. Turkey is geographically situated between opium producing countries and consumer countries in Europe. Next to its favourable geographic position, Turkey also has important links with source and destination countries. Turkey has ethnic and religious ties with Afghanistan and strong ties with consumer countries because of the presence of large Turkish communities in The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and the UK.⁴⁹ The presence of large Turkish communities, with currently an increased involvement of third generation Turks, allows the groups to infiltrate society and to abuse legitimate business structures. The majority of heroin is still transported via different branches of the Balkan routes, but a considerable amount is trafficked via the Northern Black Sea route which is gaining in importance.⁵⁰ Sometimes, Turkish OC groups tend to bypass Turkey by transporting heroin on different routes in the direction of Western Europe.⁵¹ The leading members of the Turkish OC groups stay mostly outside the EU, in Turkey⁵² or territories of the Republic of Cyprus over which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control,⁵³ but have enormous influence on the branches in the EU.⁵⁴ Some of these Turkish OC groups have their leaders legally residing in the EU, for instance second generation Turks,⁵⁵ and are developing towards an intermediary situation.⁵⁶ An increasing role of Pakistanis can be noticed as well. For instance, Afghan opiates are smuggled through Pakistan by Africans or Pakistanis to South or East Africa. From there, the opiates are smuggled either to Europe or North America. A large number of couriers pass through the Middle East by using the airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.⁵⁷ Pakistani groups seem to be increasingly threatening. These groups keep their wealthy senior network members and assets outside the EU, they are able to control the whole transport chain, have logistical networks in the countries involved, have access to armed militias, control commercial air trafficking in the Middle East and they have several legal business structures such as construction projects with mainly Pakistani employees established in the United Arab Emirates to cover their illegal activities.⁵⁸ The majority of heroin destined for the EU transits the Netherlands, which is the most significant country of the EU with regards to secondary distribution.⁵⁹

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Dutch⁶⁰ and to a lesser extent Belgian OC groups still dominate the major production of **synthetic drugs** in the EU,⁶¹ profiting from their knowledge and experience and with trafficking facilitated by major ports in Antwerp and Rotterdam which also act as important transshipment points for cocaine and heroin trafficking. However, large scale MDMA (ecstasy) production continues to spread globally, in particular in Indonesia, Canada and Australia.⁶² In some cases the use or support of criminal expertise from the EU has been observed.⁶³ This recent trend allows individuals with chemical knowledge from the EU to gain their profit somewhere else and, whilst bringing their production activities closer to the precursor source country such as China.⁶⁴

Within the EU, an increase of large scale production sites outside the Dutch-Belgian region can also be noticed. Countries such as Germany, Poland⁶⁵ and the Baltic States start using industrial and custom-made machines, possibly exploiting Dutch criminal expertise.⁶⁶ A continued movement of production sites towards the east is expected to be facilitated by, inter alia, cultural links with and the proximity of Russia where amphetamine precursor BMK has been diverted from the legitimate industry. Russian, Lithuanian and Polish OC groups, already playing an important role in the trafficking of BMK to the Netherlands and amphetamine and MDMA back to Russia, Scandinavia and the Baltic States, might further increase their influence from this perspective.⁶⁷ Whilst in addition to Poland being an important source for amphetamine, the Czech Republic also seems to have become an important source country for methamphetamine, albeit from relatively small-scale production.⁶⁸ However, whilst other Member States also report small-scale methamphetamine production, there are indications of more significant production in the Netherlands.⁶⁹

It is expected that the accession of Bulgaria and Romania will influence the EU market in synthetic drugs.⁷⁰ Bulgarian OC groups, producing millions of amphetamine tablets currently trafficked to the Middle East, might infiltrate the wider EU market.⁷¹ On the other hand, there are also indications that laboratories are moving towards destination countries in the Middle East due to law enforcement successes in Bulgaria.⁷² The large transport possibilities (Black Sea harbours and important Pan-European corridors) can further facilitate the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and possibly also the trafficking of precursors, from principal source countries, towards Western Europe.⁷³

It is also observed that amphetamine is exported in 'wet' form and ecstasy in powder form towards the UK, indicating the existence of tableting facilities in the UK. This is symptomatic of developments in Australia and Canada before these countries started seizing large scale production facilities.⁷⁴

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All these developments might indicate that regions of the world will become self-sufficient in synthetic drug production and distribution. With this in mind, the global dominance of Dutch and Belgian OC groups in relation to MDMA may diminish over time.⁷⁵

The **cannabis market** is the largest illicit drug market so far. Europe is only responsible for a small portion (5 per cent) of the global production. The main production regions are North America, South America, Africa and Asia. Cannabis is available in different forms such as cannabis resin, cannabis herb or cannabis oil. The production of cannabis resin or hashish is concentrated in North Africa (Morocco)⁷⁶ and in South-West Asia and the Middle East region, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁷⁷ Cannabis originating from Morocco enters the European continent via Spain and is transported to The Netherlands for further distribution.⁷⁸ Spanish and Moroccan nationalities are predominant within this activity and co-operation with other nationalities (Colombian, French, British, Italian, Romanian and Dutch) allow successful results. The Netherlands is an important producer of cannabis herb when focussing on the European market. Indoor cultivation (for instance home based cannabis nurseries)⁷⁹ is expanding which results in a rising potency of cannabis (that is, THC⁸⁰ is increasing through horticultural innovations).⁸¹ Indoor cultivation of cannabis is also increasing in the Czech Republic by making use of technological skills and equipment originating in The Netherlands.⁸² The actual growing of cannabis is sometimes outsourced either to other people who have financial problems and set up a nursery in their own home or to labourers from Eastern Europe (Poland, Bulgaria and Romania) who are forced to employ their skills to grow Nederweed.⁸³

The global drug problem is rather stable. The production and consumption of cocaine, synthetic drugs and cannabis have stabilised at the global level. The global opium production increased strongly in 2006 while the consumption of heroin stabilised in established markets such as Western Europe and North America.⁸⁴

The continuing expansion of opium production in Afghanistan is posing a threat not only to the security of the country but also to the global control of heroin abuse. This will not necessarily result in decreasing prices but will probably cause a higher purity and lead to new trafficking routes as well as to an expansion of existing markets towards China, India and Central Asia.⁸⁵ The possible increasing role of Pakistanis transiting the Middle East is also noteworthy.

5.2. Crimes against persons

Facilitation of illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (THB) are two distinct crime fields requiring specific responses and responsibilities. Nevertheless, there are some overlapping areas concerning facilitating factors and conditions feeding into these crimes and influencing their developments. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that, in real cases, incomplete information might lead to the classification of victims of THB as facilitated illegal immigrants, or the other way round. The possibility that illegal immigrants find themselves exploited at a later stage by OC groups not involved in their smuggling must be taken into account as well. This last consideration opens up for a wider reflection on how OC can profit from illegal immigrants.

ID fraud and borders will continue to be important factors in THB and facilitation of illegal immigration. Land and sea borders can be crossed clandestinely without resorting to ID fraud. When overstaying the validity period of a legal visa or residence permit, ID fraud is not needed either. Otherwise, stolen or forged travel documents are necessary and this is the main method used when entering the EU by plane illegally. Documents that allow entrance or residence in the EU can also be genuine but obtained on false grounds.

Concerning the second enlargement of Schengen, delays in the introduction of SIS II and VIS may temporarily increase vulnerabilities.⁸⁶

There are some variables that can be regarded as crucial for the future dynamics of THB and facilitation of illegal immigration in the EU.

One of these factors is the pool of potential victims or illegal immigrants in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia.⁸⁷ Romanian and Lithuanian OC groups will be prevalent in profiting from this situation⁸⁸. Romanian criminals might be benefiting mainly from their favourable geographic position, contributing to turn Romania into an important hub for illegal flows from Eastern Europe and Asia⁸⁹. On the other hand, main facilitating factors for Lithuanian OC groups, besides their strong structural and functional setup, might be their use of the Russian language and historical contacts in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)⁹⁰. In addition, other important actors appear to be the Polish OC groups, which are dominating THB in and via Poland.⁹¹ Another important variable is the impact of the recent EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria.

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For example, Romanian OC groups seem to focus on THB for sexual exploitation towards southern Europe (Italy, Spain and France), but their activities or victims from Romania are noticeable in many other Member States, such as Germany and Austria⁹². Their prevalence in Southern Europe might also be explained with language proximity. It is not possible to estimate the degree of involvement of these Romanian criminals in the exploitation of victims in the countries of destination because of the interfering variable of co-operation with indigenous or other non-indigenous OC groups.⁹³ For example, Italy reports on the trade in women coming from Eastern Europe between Romanian and ethnic Albanian OC groups⁹⁴. The development at EU level of the role of ethnic Albanian OC groups in this criminal field is even more difficult to assess. Reference to them as main players on national markets is not so widespread in the EU. Significant exceptions are Italy and the UK. Similar considerations can be made with regard to victims from Western Balkans.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, there is intelligence from Italy but also from Lithuania⁹⁶, Latvia⁹⁷ and Estonia⁹⁸ suggesting a propensity of ethnic Albanian criminals towards co-operation with other OC groups to get women of different ethnicities.

In the end, certain OC groups, such as the Romanian, Polish, Lithuanian ones, will continue to profit from their being EU-based and being able to recruit human beings not only from the Member State where they are centred but also from outside the EU. An additional facilitating factor in this process will be the possibility to use forged ID documents of these new Member States to ease THB or illegal immigration from third countries⁹⁹. Other OC groups, such as indigenous and ethnic Albanian ones, will continue to try to keep their market position also by exploiting human beings trafficked by the aforementioned OC groups.

The EU integration processes have started positive economic and social trends that should gradually make people from recent EU countries more difficult to be exploited by OC than before.¹⁰⁰ This should influence the number of such cases or the forms of exploitation making them less extreme.¹⁰¹ As a consequence, there could be a parallel increase in the exploitation of victims from outside the EU. On the other hand, there is intelligence suggesting that such a general positive trend in the exploitation of victims from recent EU countries is not taking place¹⁰². This might be due to the fact that the OC groups are being quicker than the potential victims and relevant authorities in benefiting and profiting from the new opportunities granted by the recent EU status. This suggests that it may also be a transitional effect.

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The other crucial set of variables includes the dynamics linked to the African continent. Every year, tens of thousands of Africans attempt to enter the EU illegally. The increased number of border management operations and surveillance systems established at the southern shores of the EU heavily feeds into the business of OC, since it makes its assistance necessary. Africa is also being used by larger and more structured OC groups involved in smuggling immigrants for other continents, particularly East, South and Southwest Asia. The relative ease of obtaining visas to West African countries plays a role in this development.¹⁰³

The role of Africa in THB for sexual exploitation into the EU seems to be mainly played by Nigerian OC groups. Their effects appear to be basically confined to Western Europe. Italy and Spain seem to act as hubs for their criminal activities that touch, to different degrees, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Ireland and the UK¹⁰⁴. Nigerian criminals usually take care of all phases of the trafficking and exploitation process.

It is remarkable that more illegal migration from Africa has not taken place to date. Africans make up less than 1 per cent of Europe's population and more than three quarters are from North Africa.¹⁰⁵

The main threat is that the situation in the African continent coupled with increasing facilitation by OC will channel a growing pressure on the southern borders of the EU.

Another crucial variable is illegal immigration from China. Chinese OC networks facilitate the illegal immigration of Chinese people into the EU.

The flow of illegal immigrants from China is not homogenous. Because of the ongoing structural changes in China, it is possible that many Chinese immigrants are not relying on the solid social network that traditionally 'regulates' their departure from China and subsequent activities in the destination countries¹⁰⁶. It is also possible that different origins of the Chinese immigrants might lead to a sort of hierarchy among them¹⁰⁷. These factors may generate an increase in the exploitation of forced labour, and lead to an expansion to new forms of exploitation such as for sexual purposes¹⁰⁸ that are more likely to lead to contacts and visibility beyond the limits of the Chinese community.

Concerning Southeast Asia, intelligence suggests that other nationalities¹⁰⁹, such as Vietnamese¹¹⁰, are emerging in the criminal fields of facilitation of illegal immigration and THB. This points to the possible growth of a new significant front in the fight against these crimes.

It is also important to monitor the evolving situation in the Black Sea region.

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Criminal groups active in this area are involved in the facilitation of illegal immigration of nationals from their own regions, but they are also used as service providers by facilitators from outside the regions.¹¹¹ The majority of illegal immigrants smuggled by OC groups via the Black Sea region originate from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Russia (mainly Chechnya), Somalia, Syria, Vietnam and Turkey. Also cargo vessels from Cameroon, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria having illegal immigrants on-board have been intercepted in the Black Sea. All the countries of the Black Sea region itself contribute to the flow of illegal immigrants.¹¹²

The most serious and immediate risk is posed by the major ports of Odessa, Istanbul, Constanta and Varna. They are used as transport and transit hubs for international shipments. The misuse of Romanian and Bulgarian forged ID documents is also a significant facilitating factor.¹¹³

In the near future, Bulgaria and Romania will experience an increase in facilitated illegal immigration of nationals from CIS States such as Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine but also from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan as well as Palestinians from the Middle East and North Africa.¹¹⁴

The security situation in Iraq has a significant impact on illegal immigration from that country to several Member States.¹¹⁵ In Sweden, for example, the number of smuggled persons from Iraq has increased and will most likely continue to be of great importance.¹¹⁶

Finally, it must be stressed that OC might profit from illegal immigrants also when they have not been trafficked into the EU. This can include the provision of counterfeit documents, money transfers and other services of the sort, and labour brokerage. In the latter case, OC can opt for the exploitation of labourers, making them victims of THB.¹¹⁷ Illegal immigrants can also be used for or forced to commit criminal activities.¹¹⁸ Developments in this direction, implying an increasing control by OC over the illegal immigrants is highly threatening.

5.3. Fraud

Fraud comprises various differing criminal phenomena ranging from VAT, investment¹¹⁹ and social security fraud into fraud on EU funds and public tenders. Also intellectual property rights (IPR) issues and cigarettes, alcohol and gasoline smuggling are regarded as fraud due to their direct and indirect financial and tax implications (theft or evasion of revenue). Fraud features more sophisticated and complicated schemes crossing the globe and involving various bogus and real companies, such as trade fraud, but also more straightforward scams orchestrated simply to lure gullible individuals into parting with their monies, such as some forms of advance-fee fraud.

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Fraud can be typified and discussed according to its main objective: fraud with direct financial benefits, and fraud with further interests to influence the society and economy (penetration into society, acquiring a legal appearance, strengthening the control over territory through the control of local administrations, establishment of new criminal business, laundering criminal proceeds, etc.).¹²⁰ It can be argued that in the end all fraud purports to financially benefit its perpetrator but this is not the sole purpose and *raison d'être* of fraud; OC can use it in a more functional way to attach itself into various legal structures and either exploit or penetrate them. In some cases the blatant money-making aspect of fraud actually misleads both law enforcement and society in general into overlooking it as nothing but.

However, fraud supports financially many threatening forms of OC. It is in many cases the latch that OC can use to penetrate society and economy almost unnoticed. This penetration can have far-reaching implications especially when it is combined with the use of corruption to influence important political and economic decision-making locally, regionally and nationally. The most threatening aspect of fraud is that it can be used by OC to overtake various sectors from construction to transport aided by cumulative fraudulent practices and subsequent lower prices offered by OC-related businesses.

Thus, fraud has a far-reaching impact on society as a whole that surpasses its direct financial implications. This applies specifically to venture and trade frauds as these expose certain key vulnerabilities in society and the economy that can be exploited by OC with grave destabilising consequences.

Below, fraud is assessed by showcasing four very different types of fraud exemplified by case studies. In relation to these, it is difficult to provide an overview of the geographical dimensions in the EU, or to even evaluate whether specific types of groups are more active in these frauds than others. VAT and tax fraud is not only perpetrated in certain Western European countries, as may have been the case in the past, but also in extra-Community trade and in the new Member States¹²¹. Additionally, various OC groups are involved in fraud, in one way or another, but it is also often associated with 'white-collar' crime and individual criminals¹²². For example, VAT fraud is by definition perpetrated in the country where the tax is normally levied¹²³ and fraud against EU funds where the funds are allocated and administered¹²⁴.

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5.3.1. Trade fraud

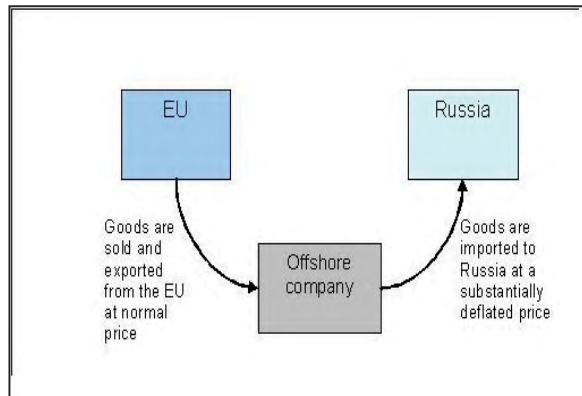
Trade fraud is a main heading for different types of crimes and fraudulent practises that exploit, in various ways, the borders between the buyer, the seller, and the possible intermediaries. It exists in trade between the Member States and third countries, but also in internal community trade. The administrative border separating the EU and the outside world in trade often acts as the delineation for the type of fraud being perpetrated.

The most important functionalities in trade fraud are the use of legal business structures and the exploitation of the transport sector as well as globalisation and borders. Additionally, corruption or infiltration and ID fraud can also be regarded as relevant to this type of fraud. Legal business structures are used to separate the crime from the criminals, and also to insulate the criminals from law enforcement attention in a specific country. The more complex and sophisticated the fraud schemes become, the more companies – existing, bankrupt and bogus – are used. Additionally, also legitimate companies with good reputation are exploited, or allow themselves to be exploited, in double-invoicing.

The current VAT system in the EU leaves considerable scope for fraud. Intra-Community supplies of goods between taxable persons are exempt from VAT in the supplying Member States since the tax is levied in the purchasing Member States. This exemption mechanism which applies also to extra-Community transactions acts as a pull factor for OC groups to carry out repeated cross-border and national purchase and sale transactions. These frequently lack any commercial logic and serve the sole purpose of evading the taxes by not paying the VAT which is due to the national tax authorities (Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) fraud), or by claiming undue repayments (VAT diversion fraud). By continuously changing the structure of companies, and by discarding them after their exploitation, the criminals succeed in hiding their fraudulent activities.¹²⁵

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One example of VAT fraud is a group active in selling mobile phones or microprocessors for computers. The fraud is perpetrated in The Netherlands, the UK and Luxembourg and assets are located in bank accounts in Curaçao. Members are mainly EU citizens but feature also US citizens while the leaders are located in various EU countries as well as Curaçao and the US. The group uses offshore companies for laundering the criminal proceeds, which seems to be a common theme in



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VAT fraud; another group operating a scrap-metal carousel scheme in Latvia, Germany Poland involves several business enterprises offshore companies to manage its substantial assets. Even though it is estimated that the majority of assets circulate in the scheme, in than one year the balance of the bank account one of the offshore companies linked to the

group exceeded ten million Euros.¹²⁶

In the trade between the EU and third countries the EU external border, which is also an administrative border, creates specific opportunities for fraud. Double invoicing, for example, is a sophisticated malpractice that balances in the no-man's-land between different jurisdictions.¹²⁷

According to data from some EU and Member State Customs Enforcement Operations between 2004 and 2006, a substantial part of transit traffic from the EU to Russia is handled by freight forwarding companies owned or influenced by OC groups. These companies extensively exploit legal infrastructures in their activities, which makes detection and investigation extremely challenging. Furthermore, irregularities and illegalities committed in connection with going through customs procedures can often be traced back to criminal activities in the haulage, transport and warehousing sectors of Russian foreign trade.¹²⁸

The main vulnerabilities that OC can exploit in the future are the weaknesses of the current VAT system in the EU, disparities in the various national legislations and tax regimes in the EU, and differences in trade-related jurisdiction and the administrative no-man's-land between Russia and the EU countries. The most threatening aspect of trade fraud is the OC exploitation of legal processes and structures to infiltrate and possibly also to destabilise important business sectors and society on the whole.

5.3.2. *Payment card fraud*

Payment card fraud is the fraudulent capture and use of financial data stored on payment cards. This data can be obtained at an ATM (skimming or copying the magnetic stripe), at a petrol station or at any Point of Sales (POS, such as a supermarket terminal), but it can also be hacked and stolen from huge databases run by shops, hotels, Internet-based merchants, etc. When the PIN is also required by the fraudsters (for cash withdrawals this is a necessity), this needs to be recorded at the ATM or POS with the help of a camera or a special keypad. Hacked credit card data for which in majority of cases the PIN number is still not available can be used for card-not-present fraud (orders for goods placed on the Internet, by phone or mail). Alternatively, this data can be abused to create forged credit cards to be used for buying luxury and high-value goods.

The most relevant facilitating factors of payment card fraud are technology, globalisation and borders. Technology enables fast and anonymous communications for criminals and provides for the formation of virtual communities. It also offers the means and environment for accessing vast amounts of financial data that can be used for criminal purposes.¹²⁹ Technological developments also influence the variations and popularity of certain types of crime. For example, the introduction of chip and PIN has rendered skimming significantly more challenging to OC by storing the necessary data on the chip instead of the magnetic stripe. This means that the data needs to be obtained in another, more complex manner.

Globalisation and borders create more leeway for payment card fraud.¹³⁰ Criminals are able to deliberately exploit the fact that national borders often disrupt existing links between the predicate offence, such as hacking, and the subsequent fraudulent use, such as that of hacked data, which often take place in different jurisdictions. In this way the existence of borders creates crime opportunities. International co-operation of law enforcement agencies in many cases does not unfortunately yet match the scale and impact of the international operations of payment card fraudsters.¹³¹

One example of a group active in payment card fraud is a Russian-Ukrainian network involved in hacking credit card data and related criminal activities. It uses the Internet for exchanging information and card data and for communication purposes.¹³² The members are located in Russia and Ukraine, which makes EU law enforcement action against the OC network relatively difficult and lengthy.

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OC can exploit the readily available technological expertise and equipment (skimming devices, hackers, phishing kits, etc.) on offer, the fact that payment card fraud is a global problem but that the relevant tools against it are mainly national, and the growing use of the Internet providing new vulnerabilities to be exploited for stealing and abusing data. The main threat in relation to payment card fraud is that OC supported by external experts increasingly gets involved in payment card fraud and, aided by its resources, develops more and more efficient means of stealing high volumes of data.

5.3.3. *Venture fraud*

With regard to fraud on EU funds (public tenders and procurement), funds granted within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) via the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), and regional funds granted via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are increasingly the targets of criminal and even OC activities. The modus operandi ranges from the fabrication of invoices for bogus companies to justify fictitious expenditures, through failing to execute the operations or activities already financed, to applying for two different financial contributions for one and the same project, fictitious or otherwise.¹³³

This type of fraud requires a certain level of specialisation from the OC group involved in it. The procedural rules regulating the provision of EU funds are relatively complex and the perpetrators need to be able to identify and abuse the loopholes provided by relevant legislations. Additionally, the criminals also need to be able to produce or procure false documents, declarations and invoices crucial for this fraud.¹³⁴ Therefore previously acquired knowledge or expertise is a pre-requisite. Influence and corruption can be used by OC groups to obtain public financing at all levels of the budget management structure ranging from local to EU level. Subsequently, it can be expected that the costs of the work or service procured by OC groups will increase in order for them to create financial reserves to be used for the costs of bribery.¹³⁵

Legal business structures can be exploited for example simply to issue invoices as third parties for non-existent transactions to justify fictitious expenditures, or to produce false declarations¹³⁶, but OC can also use legal companies and business fronts in a more comprehensive manner to separate it from criminal activities and to make it and its activities appear regular. This is the major challenge not only to law enforcement but also to all levels of local, regional and government organs that deal with tenders, procurement, and allocation of funds, national or EU; the administrative forms of OC are more difficult to point out and to detect and therefore also more challenging to counter.¹³⁷

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Criminals involved in fraud on EU funds can exploit several functional vulnerabilities for further criminal opportunities. Firstly, the number of *a posteriori* checks on EU-funded projects is in no proportion to the total number of the projects which substantially decreases the risk of detection. Secondly, the administrative and financial decentralisation of tendering, selection and monitoring procedures increases the possibilities of dangerous proximities between the political and administrative local level and OC.¹³⁸ Thirdly, administrative forms of OC do not ‘smell or taste’ like OC; they are OC shrouded in the veil of legitimate business and valid administrative processes. Therefore they are also difficult to detect and counter. Finally, there are currently very few existing screening and auditing processes¹³⁹ in local, regional and government organs to identify and deter OC-related advances. The most threatening aspect of venture fraud is its functional use by OC to abuse and infiltrate legal processes not only to benefit from but also to influence them. This can create threatening proximities between OC and often unprepared administrative structures.

5.3.4. *Advance-fee fraud*

419-fraud¹⁴⁰ is based on an offer made via email or in a letter that will purportedly result in a large payoff for the intended victim. A person or government entity is allegedly in possession of a large amount of money or gold but for various reasons this person can not access the wealth directly, or is no longer in need of it. Needless to say, the deal does not run smoothly, additional costs are borne by the victim, and in the end, the promised money transfer never happens.¹⁴¹

Technology and document forgery and ID fraud are the most relevant facilitating factors of advance-fee fraud. Technology is abused to extract email addresses of possible victims on the Internet and to forward thousands of scam emails daily to these addresses. Forged documents with stamps, seals, etc. are created to convince the victims of the legality and importance of the case.¹⁴² Globalisation and borders can also be seen to facilitate 419-fraud; money sent by the victims to the fraudsters in a foreign country or deposited on a foreign bank account will be next to impossible to retrieve. However, when the criminals are using bank accounts, telephone numbers, or email addresses in the EU it will be easier for law enforcement to track these down and close them.¹⁴³

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In this specific fraud psychological factors act as the main facilitators; the scammers appeal to human weaknesses such as loneliness, ignorance, greed, guilt and gullibility. Additionally, many victims are so ashamed of having become tricked by the scams that they do not wish to report the cases. An aspect of psychological coercion is often also used in these scams as the last option to intimidate the victims.¹⁴⁴ The most threatening aspect of advance-fee fraud is that by appealing to human weaknesses OC can relatively unimpeded amass substantial wealth, which in turn will make this type of fraud a lucrative option for other groups and criminals.

5.4. Counterfeiting

Counterfeiting is an illegal activity encompassing a wide range of criminal fields. It can be a crime in itself, a specialisation and a facilitating factor for other crimes.

Counterfeiting can be divided in three main categories:

- Currency counterfeiting (banknotes and coins);
- Documents counterfeiting (ID, freight, vehicle, excise, etc.);
- Commodity counterfeiting (intellectual property rights infringements).

Each category has a different impact and poses different threats, but in line with the ongoing trend towards multi-crime, many OC groups will continue to specialise or make use of varied combinations of counterfeiting. When smuggling counterfeit commodities, for instance, OC groups fabricate false freight documents and excise stamps;¹⁴⁵ criminals uttering counterfeit money use false ID documents.¹⁴⁶

Currency counterfeiting, and in particular that of the Euro, is reported throughout the EU. The countries most affected during the first ten months of 2007 were France, Italy and Spain, followed by Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and Belgium. The smallest number of Euro counterfeits was seized in Denmark, Latvia and Estonia.¹⁴⁷ The main sources of counterfeit Euros are Bulgaria, Italy and, to a lesser extent, Spain, France and the United Kingdom within the EU; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia and Peru outside of the EU.¹⁴⁸ Lithuanian OC groups have greatly decreased, most probably ceased, their production of counterfeit Euros, but they are still among the most efficient distributors due to their widespread network of contacts with producers and their uttering capacity.¹⁴⁹ OC groups producing counterfeit money are also involved in other criminal activities, including drug trafficking, THB, armed robberies, intellectual property rights (IPR) fraud, document forgery, exploitation of prostitution and arms trafficking.¹⁵⁰

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Overall, currency counterfeiting is characterised by a strict distribution of tasks between producers, middle-men and distributors, in some cases controlled or, more often than not, tolerated by Mafia-type Italian OC – in particular Camorra – and OC groups from Lithuania, Bulgaria and Poland.¹⁵¹ The itinerant community is among the main distributors in France and Spain.¹⁵² Most of the involved OC groups have a multi-crime profile, and exploit their international dimension and all available trafficking routes to provide to other criminals and to the public a wide range of illegal products and services.

The threat posed by currency counterfeiting is not only economic, but also political and social, because a heavy impact on the market of counterfeit banknotes would affect the trust of EU citizens in the common currency, with direct consequences on the commerce., Currency counterfeiting in the EU is a present threat that, for the time being, is under control,

Documents counterfeiting is a major crime facilitator. ID, passports, car documents, bills of entry and of landing, national health insurance cards, residence permits, seamen's identity books, social security forms, employer's declarations, salary specifications and breeding documents are among the documents most commonly counterfeited.¹⁵³ Counterfeit documents facilitate crimes such as drug trafficking, THB, facilitating illegal immigration, stolen vehicles trafficking, commodity smuggling (including cigarettes and spirits), identity theft and many types of fraud.¹⁵⁴ The transnational nature of modern OC is reflected in the utmost care spent by OC groups in carefully counterfeiting all documents to be used to cross several borders in apparent legitimacy. Forged accompanying documents also facilitate the infiltration of illegal products into the legitimate retail sector,¹⁵⁵ releasing distribution from the clandestine enclosure of black markets, thus dramatically increasing the profits of OC groups.

The threat posed by document counterfeiting is directly proportional to the crime it facilitates. It ranges from a high-level security threat (in the case of counterfeit documents disguising terrorists or other dangerous criminals) to an economic threat of significant impact (when counterfeit documents facilitate fraud or commodity smuggling), passing through the threat to health and basic human rights brought by drug trafficking, facilitated illegal immigration and THB.

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The limitless variety of official or semi-official documents existing throughout the world, combined with the ever-increasing movement of people and goods across real and virtual borders, hampers efficient controls and facilitates illegal operations. The threat deriving from document counterfeiting is therefore to be considered as very serious.

Commodity counterfeiting is a crime which is being given increasing attention. All Member States are affected by it, and the emerging threat is the increasing infiltration of counterfeit goods into the legitimate retail sector.¹⁵⁶ The items most frequently counterfeited are, in descending order, cigarettes, CDs, DVDs and cassettes, clothes and accessories, electrical equipment, medicines, toys and games, cosmetics and personal care, food and beverages, watches and jewellery, and computer hardware.¹⁵⁷ Counterfeit items seized in the EU mainly originate from China, followed by the United Arab Emirates, India, Algeria, Hong Kong, Egypt, Turkey and Iran.¹⁵⁸ The United Arab Emirates most probably are a distribution hub more than a production centre. Other source countries reported by Member States are Russia, Italy, Moldova, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan.¹⁵⁹ Thorough exploitation of the transport sector and of state-of-the-art technology, globalisation and borders are the main facilitating factors for commodity counterfeiting, making it a crime in perfect line with the modern nature and structure of international OC. EU-based OC groups establish alliances with foreign groups involved in the same criminal business, modelling their endeavours on legitimate transnational trading companies and providing to unknowing or self-absolving customers products and services at bargain prices. The social tolerance, which is another notable facilitating factor, is here coupled with a parallel legal tolerance, because that specific crime is seldom given due attention from a legislative and law enforcement viewpoint.¹⁶⁰

The threat posed by commodity counterfeiting and IPR fraud is multiple and potentially devastating. The sectors most threatened by it are health and safety, economy, innovation (scientific and technological) and employment.

The threat on health and safety of buyers of counterfeit goods derives from five main sectors:

- Pharmaceuticals;
- Food, drinks, spirits and cigarettes;
- Electrical devices;
- Toys;
- Automotive components.

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Counterfeit pharmaceutical are particularly dangerous. Within the EU the threat seems so far circumscribed within Internet sales of lifestyle drugs, but a future penetration into the legitimate retail sector cannot be ruled out.¹⁶¹ Counterfeit processed food and untested counterfeit mini-scooters have been recently seized, in France and Lithuania respectively,¹⁶² inferring a deep penetration into diverse markets of potentially dangerous commodities.

The economic threat stems from the enormous profits made by OC with commodity counterfeiting, which is promptly funnelled into other criminal enterprises, and the proportionate loss suffered by private companies and by national treasury, as no tax is levied on counterfeit goods. Quantitative analysis carried out by the OECD indicates that the volume of tangible counterfeit and pirated products in international trade could be up to EUR 140 billion.¹⁶³

A side-effect of commodity counterfeiting is its impact on innovation and research, the core product and added value of intellectual property. Decreasing profits due to unfair competition by counterfeiters negatively affect innovation and research, slowing progress down.

Moreover, falling profits and shrinking markets unavoidably lead to a necessary reduction of working personnel, with consequent loss of jobs. Widespread unemployment is the first result, the second being the possible hiring of unemployed specialists by counterfeiters expanding their lucrative activities.

5.5. The horizontal dimension of the criminal markets

Drug trafficking remains a highly profitable criminal activity and, severe legislations and harsh punishments notwithstanding, is the most reported type of crime in which OC is and will continue to be involved. As in all markets, demand and offer have a direct impact on the dynamics of drug trafficking, and OC groups need to follow or to influence the evolving preferences of the consumers. Heroin, for instance, is declining in favour and use in the richest part of Europe, while opium production in Afghanistan is constantly increasing: potential production in 2007 is estimated at 8,200 tons (meaning more than 800 tons of heroin), a 34 per cent increase compared to 2006.¹⁶⁴ Booming production combined with shrinking demand is a commercial nightmare, whose prospect compels OC groups trafficking in heroin to find new markets and to give to their product a new, more attractive image to reverse its negative trend in many Member States. For that reason Southeast Europe, which for many years has merely been a transit area, has become a target, and in some southeast European countries heroin use has been growing steadily in the last decades.¹⁶⁵

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Another strategy to absorb possible losses due to mutating choices of former clients is the diversification of the offer. An on-going trend is that OC groups trafficking in drugs are increasingly oriented towards a multi-drug offer.¹⁶⁶ The fact that also Turkish OC groups, historical heroin monomaniacs, are now dealing with other types of drug is solid evidence of the on-going situation.¹⁶⁷ Drug smugglers, even at a street level, are evolving into versatile sellers, smoothly convincing their victims to acquire the most expensive article in store. The trend towards diversification is not limited to drug trafficking: international OC groups are widening their operational scope and the range of criminal activities they are involved in. In a smaller, globalised world with a growing demand of all goods, smuggling is the quintessential criminal activity, and is passing from a situation of strict specialisation, in which each OC group only trafficked one type of product, to one of multi-offer and, consequently, of multi-crime. The basic commercial law that trucks must never run empty is duly followed by OC groups, which are using trafficking routes two-ways. To do so, they need to engage in diversified criminal activities, carefully balancing demand and offer, source and destination.¹⁶⁸ International, cross-crime relations are thus facilitated, and OC groups learn new trades, new MOs and new routes, using their newly acquired expertise to plan with the utmost care all phases of their criminal schemes. One of the most used strategies is to amass funds through a low-risk, high-profit crime such as cigarette smuggling or fraud, later investing them in a highly lucrative criminal activity, for instance drug smuggling.¹⁶⁹

Fraud is one of the mentioned low-risk, high-profit crimes used to fund other criminal enterprises, but it can be immensely lucrative in itself. Fraud is benefiting from a (totally undeserved) good public image for the only reason that it is not (in most cases) physically harmful and is often perceived as a victimless crime, not considering that often the victims of organised fraud are chosen among the weakest segments of society.¹⁷⁰ The romantic image of the genial and witty swindler has been replaced by that of professional OC groups that, through their board of corporate lawyers and financial advisors, dig out loopholes and weaknesses in laws, systems and persons to ruthlessly exploit them. As better described in the appropriate section of the 2008 OCTA, besides providing pecuniary profits fraud can and will be used as an insidious mean to penetrate into economic, social or public institutions. Being fraud based on deceit, the use of counterfeit documents (ID, financial, social security, pension, vehicle and many other types of document) features as a major facilitator.

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Another facilitator is the use of technology, in particular Internet trading that provides the double protection of anonymity and trans-border crime. And borders are the third main facilitating factor, mainly reflecting onto trade fraud and, indirectly, on payment card and advance-fee frauds. The last facilitator is represented by the human factor: it ranges from gullibility to greed, from negligence to corruption.

While fraud is based on false pretence, the vast realm of counterfeiting is based on false articles. Currency counterfeiting is a highly specialised field that, in the case of Euro, is stabilizing on an average of 50,000 false banknotes seized every month within the EU while already in circulation.¹⁷¹ Document counterfeiting is an important facilitating factor widely used by all kinds of criminals to conceal their identities or their illegal movements or products. Commodity counterfeiting, with related IPR infringements, is a type of crime that is rapidly expanding both in size and in threat. The economic threat is very high, and is not limited to financial losses incurred by companies whose products are counterfeited and by national treasuries for taxes not levied. Thousands of jobs are lost every year because of the unfair competition brought by counterfeiters to legitimate business structures, and in the long run the funds destined to innovation and research may decrease to the point of stalling the scientific and technologic progress. But that prospect is not the most threatening. In fact, the clear and present danger of commodity counterfeiting is represented by hazardous counterfeits: medicines, food, spirits, cigarettes, electric devices, toys and automotive parts. The risk of serious bodily harm and even death is concrete and high, and bound to increase in the future. Counterfeiting is a transnational crime, its facilitators are the misuse of the transport sector and the black market, where false products are commonly traded (but they are more and more penetrating the legitimate retail sector). Other facilitators are, again, borders and the human factor, namely the tolerant attitude of knowing buyers of counterfeits.

In 2006, cigarettes were the most seized counterfeit good in the EU.¹⁷² However, cigarette smuggling is not limited to counterfeits: authentic cigarettes of the most renowned and popular brands are a historical forte in the ample range of contraband goods. Tobacco smuggling, along with spirits, is a widely reported criminal activity, its destination being Member States with high excise in the Atlantic region (UK, Ireland and Germany) and the Northeast region (Germany, Sweden and Norway).¹⁷³ Discrepancies in tax levels between the Member State are so evident that some OC groups make a considerable profit even (illegally) selling in highly taxed markets cigarettes legitimately bought – taxes paid – in Member States where the taxes are lower.¹⁷⁴

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Borders are thence the main facilitating factor for cigarettes and spirits smuggling, but also black markets, the exploitation of the transport sector and, in some cases, technology¹⁷⁵ play an important role. The smuggling of cigarettes and spirits will increase in the future as long as Member State tax levels display significant differences.

The influx of people that, willingly or unwillingly, are constantly streaming towards the EU, aided by people smugglers and traffickers, is a threat that needs to be assessed on multiple levels. The basic distinction between illegal immigrants and trafficked human beings, in fact, is of the utmost importance as far as the origin of the threat is considered. Facilitating illegal immigration is an external threat: smugglers usually are OC groups not based in the destination countries, and their service is to transport immigrants up to the frontier of the selected country, then abandoning them to their destiny. Smugglers of immigrants try to limit to the minimum their permanence (if any) on the territory of the destination country, having nothing more to gain from their victims and being perfectly aware of the heavy sentences awaiting them in case of arrest. Traffickers in human beings, on the other hand, are an internal threat. In fact, albeit often being non-EU citizens themselves, they have deep roots within the EU and solid links with domestic OC groups, which permit them to dispose of their human merchandise in the most lucrative way. Victims of THB are immediately directed towards some illegal occupation awaiting them, and they can be bought and sold several times between different OC groups without even knowing it. They are destined to live like ghosts, paralysed by the prospect of inescapable retaliation, and therefore more afraid of being caught and repatriated by local authorities than of living on their slave-like existence. A trafficked human being is immensely more profitable than an illegal immigrant, and some OC groups, having realized it, are behaving accordingly. It is increasingly reported that people traffickers are displaying in recent times a decreasingly violent attitude with their victims. Moreover, OC groups approach illegal immigrants offering them (illegal) work and other services, since regular services are often unattainable by clandestine immigrants. Some OC groups manage human beings not as victims, but as clients. At least two Bulgarian OC groups, trafficking women to western Europe, organise all phases of the trip and permanence of their victims abroad in an efficient, businesslike way, taking care of the travel, the logistic, the regular period of permanence in the Schengen area and even the remittance back to Bulgaria of the women's savings.¹⁷⁶ Not knowing the actual share of the women's earning withheld by traffickers, it is difficult to discern that new way of THB from a normal service provider company.

And that can be the future of OC groups.

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As clearly demonstrated by the most lucrative criminal activity – drug trafficking – people bring more money when they are offered products or services than when they are victimized. Smuggling is the historical example, and black markets are its confirmation. Modern and sophisticated OC groups seem to realize that instead of robbing citizens, it is better to offer them what is forbidden, rare, too expensive or craved. The control on international smuggling routes, the establishment of strategic alliances with powerful OC groups in source and transit countries, the exploitation of borders and of all related unsolved issues, the misuse of the transport sector, the control over black market and illicit labour, the use of technology and virtual markets, the tolerant attitude of the ‘targets’: these are all converging facilitators of a criminal trend that can reach the level of a parallel economy.

The evolution of criminal markets in the past few years presents clear and unmistakable analogies with that of the licit market.

The legitimate commercial offer, historically, was characterised by a great number of small, specialised shops and services: the baker, the butcher, the blacksmith, the tailor and so on. Today, multinational and multi-product commercial chains and the expanding tertiary sector have kicked out of the picture shopkeepers and artisans, offering cheaper – if cheap – products to a standardised clientele. Clients are satisfied because they can buy easily replaceable – if anonymous – goods at a relatively low cost, ready to toss them away as soon as a trendier item gets on the market.

Businessmen are satisfied because their all-comprehensive, all-inclusive, non-specialised malls are so popular that people flock into them to spend not only their money, but also their leisure time. Old shopkeepers and artisans are satisfied only if they have been able to recycle themselves to be integrated into the new commercial reality.

Criminal markets are following the same path. Some years ago, OC groups were specialised in specific types of crime, and their range of action was limited. Criminals carried out their illicit activities with the shopkeeper’s mindset, often passing on their trade to their offspring, like any good artisan. Competition was limited, victims were available in large numbers and the main worry was to keep crime within tolerable limits not to elicit a strong response from the police. Now the main OC groups are transnational, multi-ethnic and poly-crime, and they can offer an ample variety of products and services. They woo and pamper their clients like any good merchant, but they are far more competent in collecting credits. And their offices do not always accept complaints. Their services can be ruthlessly efficient: it is well known that – while the application procedures may diverge – the ‘protection’ provided by the racket is more effective – in its own, wicked way – than that offered by the police.

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Every good and every need is seen as a possible source of profit, and into profit it is converted. Their victims are transformed into 'clients' who, unlike regular clients, even if dissatisfied cannot call the police.

That vision can be the reason of the new way of treating trafficked human beings: helping them, winning their trust, absorbing them into the group, making them recruiters of new victims and of new clients. Illegal immigrants are growing fast in number and diffusion, needing goods and services that cannot be asked from regular structures for fear of disclosing their illegal residence status. OC groups are ready and willing to fill the gap, making a profit and having the possibility to contact and manage more and more people that can be softly exploited within the black economy. The same applies to all high-level, refined OC groups. Violent and aggressive crime can be left to more primitive and less structured groups, while the leading syndicates can glide smoothly in the parallel economy with the aim of satisfying their growing clientele, thus realizing the ultimate goal of the top-level criminals: that of being considered successful entrepreneurs.¹⁷⁷

Within that framework, it is conceivable that, in the future, OC markets will follow the last evolutions of the legitimate markets, the most notable of which are e-trade and hard-discounts. OC is already deeply involved in e-trade, as any kind of illicit merchandise is sold through anonymous websites or worldwide trading sites such as e-Bay. Difficulties in controlling the Internet and the international dimension facilitate a future wider use of the world-wide web for illicit sales, marking it as one of the most important emerging threats. Hard-discounts, on the other hand, are a commercial innovation that, besides its focus on inconspicuous and not advertised brands, is based on the principle of reducing the passages between producers and consumers. Within the criminal environment, a first step in that direction has been taken in Afghanistan, where more and more laboratories refining opium into morphine or heroin have been opened,¹⁷⁸ thus permitting local OC groups to trade the immensely more lucrative end product bypassing Turkish specialists. Such a trend will give the possibility to transnational OC groups to run the whole production and distribution processes of entire criminal markets, optimising their profits and cutting out local and minor OC groups, which will be forced to resort to other or limited criminal activities. That can lead to a harsher impact on the territory by local OC groups, while major international OC groups will increase their revenues and infiltrate more and more the commercial, economic and social sectors, thus posing a greater, more powerful threat.

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As mentioned before, there are several factors which have lead to the present situation and which will continue to be important in the future. However, two emerge above the others.

The first is the exploitation of globalisation and borders. Without borders there would be no smuggling, and modern OC is nothing more than smuggling brought to its highest level. Illicit outsourcing, illicit production, illicit import and illicit sale cut the price of any good or service in a dramatic way. Any law-abiding trader, who duly pays all salaries and social contributions, all fees and fares, all taxes and excises for its products, is not in the position to compete with OC groups that can manage production in and transport from virtually all countries in the world.

The second is less definite but more disturbing: it is the human factor. The assessment of the reasons bringing the average citizen to remorselessly make business with OC is most probably a sociological issue, not to be discussed within the OCTA. However, social tolerance is one of the facilitators taken into consideration by the OCTA, and through that perspective it is possible to examine the problem. Today, many citizens tend to think that whatever pleases him and does not harm anybody else is good and right. For that very reason, otherwise law-abiding citizens do not hesitate to buy counterfeit CDs and DVDs, not realising that they are feeding OC groups. Following the same subjective philosophy, people believe they are the proprietors of their own selves, thus considering legitimate their self-destruction through the abuse of drugs or spirits, not realising that their behaviour, besides feeding OC groups, has a severe health impact. Organised criminals are particularly able in sensing these and other weaknesses, and to transform them into money. If softer methods prove to be more efficient and profitable, harsh methods will be abandoned. And more and more clients will be subtracted from the competitors of the legal market.

On the illegal market, however, OC groups remain unchallenged by any credible competition, and in line with their new commercial approach they can venture in previously unexplored criminal fields. A notable example is provided by child pornography. Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.¹⁷⁹ The criminal activity perpetrated by child sex offenders on the Internet consists in the sale, distribution, purchase and download of such illegal material. Until not long ago, that exchange was done to fuel personal perversions, but without pursuing possible profits. Albeit 'pay-per-view' sites on which it is possible, upon payment, to download or view child abusive material exist since some time, these websites are lately increasing in number, as OC groups have detected the potential profitability of the specific criminal sector and, besides managing the e-trade, are deeply involved in the production, often in professional studios, of child abusive material.¹⁸⁰

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The commerce can be facilitated through other websites (aggregators) owned by financial intermediaries (billing companies).¹⁸¹ Besides technology, which is indispensable for the perpetration of that specific crime, a powerful facilitator is again provided by borders. The child abusive networks are organised as real enterprises.¹⁸² They are normally located in those countries where an appropriate legislation regarding the sexual exploitation of children is missing and they store their websites on servers located in countries where the data retention for the log files kept by the relevant internet service providers (ISP) is not regulated.¹⁸³ Intelligence from past and on-going investigations suggests that the main production of child pornography to be disseminated for commercial purposes takes place in countries of the Former Soviet Union (FSU). A certain production of child pornography for commercial purposes also takes place in the United States, with particular emphasis on modelling websites, and Japan.¹⁸⁴

Similarly to child pornography, OC groups perform other criminal activities using the whole world as a stage, the most international of them all being the ultimate organised crime: money laundering. And money laundering, being very often perpetrated by OC groups in combination with other crimes – its predicate offences – is yet another sign of the trend towards multi-crime of modern OC.¹⁸⁵ At the same time, the existence of experts providing their services to other OC groups is evidence of the increasing commercial attitude described above. Many are the methods used by OC groups to launder money, and in the last years technology is becoming an important facilitating factor.¹⁸⁶ But the two most powerful facilitators are the exploitation of the financial sector and borders. The financial sector is the indispensable vehicle to funnel into the legal economy the profits of crime. Even if the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has stated that ‘as of 13 October 2006, there are no Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories’, the actual implementation of the FATF’s 40+9 Recommendations is far to be achieved. The financial sectors most frequently indicated as easily exploitable are alternative remittance systems, which are remittance systems¹⁸⁷ operating completely or in part outside conventional banking channels. However, also conventional banking channels can be and are constantly exploited by OC groups, often through third persons.¹⁸⁸ Financial operators are sometimes displaying social and professional tolerance – for the sake of their own and their institution’s profit – when dealing without proper action with clearly suspicious operations.¹⁸⁹ The common denominator of the most complex and effective money laundering scheme is the international dimension. The level of complexity is mostly due to elaborate settlement systems employed and the range of jurisdictions through which a transfer could pass. Each jurisdiction might hold a part of the evidence or intelligence needed to track the transaction.

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Therefore, obtaining an overall view of particular operations from beginning to end is made more difficult.¹⁹⁰ As in other criminal fields, also in money laundering, OC groups display peerless skill in managing the international dimension, while national and international authorities are constantly struggling – often to no avail – with it.

6. THE OC LANDSCAPE

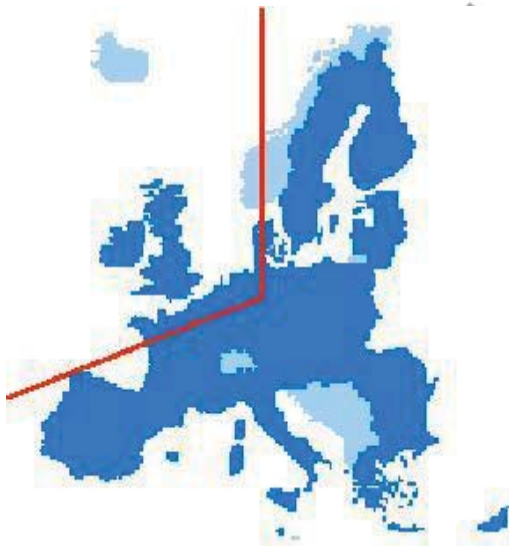
In line with the focus established in the 2007 OCTA, much focus is provided for the geographical dimension of OC in the EU, to complement the relationship between crimes and criminals and provide a context for their whereabouts. Four regions of the EU will be analysed:

- The North-West region;
- The North-East region;
- The South-East region;
- The South-West region.

This will be followed by an assessment of the dynamic relationship between the regions captured in the idea of criminal hubs.

6.1. The North-West region: The Atlantic region

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Atlantic region encompasses more or less The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, the UK, Ireland, the north-western part of Germany and the north of France. Specific particularities of the region include the major transport infrastructures, well established ethnic communities of reference, different tax regimes, geographical proximity to various Member States and a flourishing economy which offers possibilities that can and are exploited by OC.

The North-West region, characterised by enormous transport facilities, plays one of the main roles in drug trafficking and even in drug production. The Netherlands is Europe's main secondary distribution centre for both cocaine (originating from South America) and heroin (originating from Turkey) and is together with Belgium the world's primary producer of ecstasy.¹⁹¹

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The well developed transport network in the Atlantic region acts as the main facilitating factor for drug trafficking and offers possibilities for illegal immigration and THB. World class harbours such as Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg and Dover act as major maritime gateways to the EU while a well developed infrastructure for air, waterborne, rail and road traffic facilitates any kind of transport through this region.¹⁹² Several million containers pass through Rotterdam and Antwerp and from an economic perspective it is not possible to monitor everything which in return means opportunities for OC.¹⁹³ The 100 per cent inspection regime¹⁹⁴ at Schiphol airport had an effect on cocaine trafficking towards The Netherlands. But as a result of this measure, cocaine smuggling appears to be shifting towards other airports with transatlantic flights in surrounding countries including airports in Germany, France and Belgium from where land routes are used to complete the trajectory. Or cocaine is first flown from The Netherlands Antilles to the Dominican Republic or Mexico, from where it is transferred onto a second flight to The Netherlands. Mexicans, in the past focused on the North American market, are recently increasingly active in Europe.¹⁹⁵ By assessing illegal immigration, the EU airports mainly affected by illegal immigration remain those in the Atlantic region, namely the UK, Germany, France and The Netherlands. The UK is on top of the list and noticed the highest immigration pressure. OC groups especially exploit the large transit areas in the major European airports because they are hard to monitor.¹⁹⁶

A second important facility for OC within this region consists of well established ethnic communities of reference. During recent decades, Turks have established themselves in various Western countries and connections have been developed between Turkish groups in Western Europe and Turkey. However, the presence of large Turkish or Kurdish communities in Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, the UK and France particularly facilitates Turkish OC in the Atlantic region. Group leaders and assets usually reside outside the EU (Turkey and territories of the Republic of Cyprus over which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control)¹⁹⁷ but have enormous influence on branches in the EU. The involvement of second and third generation Turks, who are more ingrained in society, increases the ability to make use of all forms of influence in the EU.¹⁹⁸

Well established Colombian communities in the UK facilitate cocaine trafficking into the EU and an emerging risk of Colombian communities in other countries of the Atlantic region can facilitate cocaine trafficking even further. These non-EU groups are structured as an oriented cluster and keep their leaders outside the EU. Some groups are moving towards an intermediary situation.¹⁹⁹

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These groups keep their assets in the EU or have senior members based in the EU.²⁰⁰ These senior members, for instance, oversee the activities of the Colombian networks in the UK and The Netherlands. The networks use the Colombian communities to disguise their drug trafficking activities by giving them a safe haven within which they organise their business.²⁰¹

Chinese OC groups involved in several crime domains exploit the existence of a growing Chinese community in the Atlantic region. Large amounts of Chinese workers aspire to work in the Atlantic region, especially in the UK. Chinese OC groups not only organise immigration but, once they have arrived in the UK also exploit these illegal immigrants by employing them as gardeners in cannabis factories, as cheap labour in Chinese restaurants²⁰², as vendors of smuggled and counterfeited goods etc. Leaders, usually of Chinese ethnicity, have UK citizenship and claim to have affiliations with Triads based in China, which allows them to intimidate and exploit Chinese immigrants.²⁰³

Some Moroccan OC groups, well established amongst others in Belgium and in The Netherlands, as well as some groups with Dutch nationals, are specialised in the importation of Moroccan hashish via Spain towards The Netherlands²⁰⁴ either by making use of the major harbours in Belgium and The Netherlands, or via land routes. The coffee shops in The Netherlands²⁰⁵ can be seen as an additional incentive for cannabis trafficking towards the Netherlands.

The geo-strategic position of the Atlantic region facilitates different forms of OC. The North-West region is not only from a pure geographical point of view an important gateway to the EU but has also essential cultural and historical links with different regions of the world. The countries of the Atlantic region were important colonial powers in history. France had colonial possessions in West Africa, North America, South America and Asia. The UK had large colonies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, East Africa and Asia. The Netherlands had overseas possessions in Indonesia, South America, South Africa etc. while Belgium had an important colony in Central Africa. Small overseas possessions in the Caribbean play an important role in transatlantic cocaine trafficking. The Caribbean is for instance an important transshipment point for cocaine entering the UK via Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis. The island of Aruba is responsible for a significant part of the cocaine seizures destined for The Netherlands while Martinique is an important transshipment location for cocaine entering France.²⁰⁶

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The geographical proximity to various Member States in the Atlantic region offers another possibility for OC. Within the continental part in particular, people are free to move within this extensive area and do not have to deal with controls at the border. Law enforcement on the other hand is still to a large extent limited to operate within its own borders. Itinerant groups involved in large-scale burglaries are highly exploiting this situation. Itinerant groups originating from the former Yugoslavia are active all over the world but the geographical proximity to various Member States and the well developed transport network makes it even easier in the Atlantic region to cross borders in a limited amount of time. These groups are usually non-EU-based groups. Their strategic interests and leaders are often located in the former Yugoslavia while they operate in the EU. The members committing the criminal activities often have a kind of safe house or camp site settled close to the border, especially in The Netherlands, from where they prepare the criminal activities in another country. As a result, Belgium, France and Germany are among the most affected countries.²⁰⁷ In addition, Belgium and Luxembourg have been temporarily touched by rather violent itinerant groups using violence especially against elderly people.²⁰⁸ Itinerant groups are structured as oriented clusters. Those groups, which live on camp sites, are composed of family members, who can be exchanged between different groups or families. The groups are led by an important family member who also acts as a judge inside the community. The groups stay in different countries and can be led by one main group of influential representatives.²⁰⁹

The UK and Ireland are highly attractive destinations for illegal immigrants and OC groups who facilitate illegal immigration. Both countries are favourite destinations because of a flourishing economy and consequent demand for workers, particularly in low skilled sectors, and the image of easy access to health, welfare and education systems. The English language, established community ties in the UK and the absence of an obligation to carry and identification document are also important push factors while some immigrants are also aware of the fact that it is difficult for the UK to return them back to their country of origin once they successfully reached the UK.²¹⁰ Ireland, historically a country experiencing high levels of emigration, has only in the nineties become a destination for migrants. Significant numbers of people are now attempting to enter Ireland and, since about 1998, Nigerian nationals have arrived in Ireland in significant numbers.²¹¹ Nigerian OC groups for generations present in amongst others the UK and The Netherlands and responsible for various forms of fraud²¹² are now also discovered in Ireland.²¹³ A popular modus operandi, used by facilitators of illegal immigration from China, is the abuse of student visas. This modus operandi has been reported by amongst others the UK, Ireland, The Netherlands and Belgium.

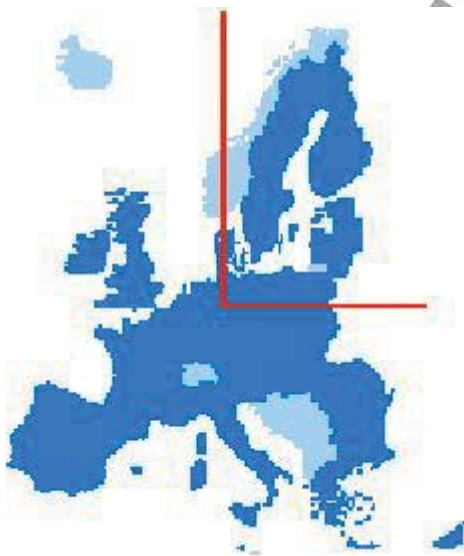
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Several Member States such as Belgium and The Netherlands are in the process of changing the rules and policies for student visas in order to prevent abuse. As a result, Chinese nationals residing in the EU today will probably not get an extension on their visas. This might increase the immigration pressure on the UK.²¹⁴ In both the UK and Ireland, educational establishments gain in importance as facilitating factors in case of illegal immigration. This allows the use of genuine documents instead of falsified documents to apply for access to a school. Legitimate but recently also bogus schools, established by the OC group themselves, help obtaining the VISA applications by providing the necessary documents.²¹⁵

Different tax levels, attributed to the same type of products encourage criminals to involve themselves in the lucrative business of tax fraud, and high levels of taxation in Ireland and the UK provides opportunities for smuggling. These suspects are mainly indigenous groups, Irish and UK nationals.²¹⁶ Missing Trader Intra Community fraud (MTIC) exploits the free movement of goods between the Member States. The UK is highly affected by carousel fraud, a particular form of MTIC fraud. The goods involved, typically small and expensive items which can easily be packed and transported in bulk such as mobile phones, computer chips etc. can go round the carousel many times before the fraud is discovered.²¹⁷

6.2. The North-East region: Approximating the Baltic Sea region

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criminal dynamics of the Baltic countries are mostly influenced by their interposition between countries supplying cigarettes and synthetic drugs precursors and significant destination countries for cigarettes, synthetic drugs, cocaine and hashish. North-East criminal hub identified by the 2007 OCTA presents attractive opportunities to non-indigenous OC groups originating from the neighbouring countries such as Russia, Belarus, Ukraine. However, in specific the situation is exploited by the most prominent indigenous OC

groups established in Lithuania. These groups are very well organised and co-ordinated and can often reach significant levels of influence on the Lithuanian non-criminal environment. Other oriented clusters such as some Polish²¹⁸ and Estonian OC groups are also in an important position in parts of the region.

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The central role of the Lithuanian OC groups in the North East hub and beyond is strongly based on their efficient use of the international dimension and well-developed group structures. They are the distributors and facilitators the North-East hub is dependent upon; they not only produce and distribute counterfeit currencies and documents but are also active in THB, facilitation of illegal immigration and smuggling of cigarettes and drugs to or via Lithuania, but increasingly also in cases where this traffic does not even touch upon the country. There are indications, for example, that the role and importance of Lithuanian groups in the international cocaine traffic is increasing.²¹⁹ They have become, in corporate terms, the supply chain that can procure and deliver practically any goods anywhere; not only to their region of origin but most often well beyond. The transformation of OC groups in the region from purely traditional or violent groups into more sophisticated groups that are also involved in economic crime and fraud is a generally worrying development. Although it is not clear whether these groups maintain their involvement also in the original and more traditional criminal market (for example drugs, cigarettes smuggling, robberies, and so on), access to financial institutions and other legal structures of society, which are often prerequisites for economic crime and fraud, provide new opportunities for criminals to launder and hide the criminal proceeds.²²⁰

Additionally, an important feature of the region is the existence of borders between the EU and Russia. This border separates two very different types of legislation and makes cross-border law enforcement co-operation sometimes lengthy and cumbersome.²²¹ Therefore the border can also be seen to facilitate certain OC groups and markets. Money laundered in the EU by cells of the Russian 'mafia' is administratively separated from the predicate offence which has often taken place in Russia,²²² while Russian OC groups involved in trade fraud²²³ can abuse the existence of the border by exploiting the specific fraction of the administrative process after the goods are exported from the EU and before they are imported in Russia. This small but decisive 'no-man's-land' can be exploited for double invoicing,²²⁴ a type of trade fraud providing substantial proceeds. A further facilitator for trade fraud in this region is the large volume of transports across the borders and other vulnerabilities of the logistics sector as well as the increasing complicity of business ventures and practices²²⁵ which can deliberately or accidentally shroud any malpractices and outright criminal offences under the veil of legitimate business transactions.

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The expansion of the Schengen area into the three Baltic States and Poland will have certain implications on the region especially in the criminal markets of facilitation of illegal immigration, drug smuggling and property crime. It is estimated that Latvia, Lithuania and Poland may experience a growing number of cases of illegal immigration, partly due to their increasing role as transit countries in illegal immigration directed towards Western Europe.²²⁶ The legal import of Subutex from Estonia to Finland may discontinue following Estonia's having joined the Schengen area. This may increase large-scale smuggling of Subutex and other narcotic medical products from Estonia and possibly also redirect Finnish drug tourism.²²⁷ The extension of the Schengen area may facilitate the movement of criminals perpetrating property crime and increase organised contract crime carried out by foreigners visiting Finland from the new Schengen countries, especially by Russian speaking criminals living permanently in Estonia.²²⁸

The new Schengen countries will experience a new type of pressure on their eastern borders as these became the external Schengen borders. For example, increased criminal activities in the border areas between Latvia and Russia and Latvia and Belarus are foreseen as well as the creation of new transit channels into the EU²²⁹. Certain technical factors and the absence of the entry and exit system may increase the vulnerabilities that OC can at least momentarily exploit. Furthermore, it is possible that OC groups have already placed would-be migrants in the new Schengen countries seeking to move into Western Europe. It remains a possibility that OC groups will also intensively test the visa policies of the new members.²³⁰

The 2007 OCTA conclusions suggest that oriented clusters are relatively characteristic to the North-East region. Due to the relatively strong representation of EU-based oriented clusters in the region it can be suggested that non-EU-based groups need to either co-operate with local, and in many cases oriented structures in order to access the criminal markets, or develop certain characteristics of EU-based groups by evolving through intermediary situations (that is, the second generation development).

An example of the former development are the ethnic Albanian OC groups active in exploiting Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian women for prostitution. There are indications that they are co-operating with Lithuanian OC groups in this criminal market²³¹ and that they are supplying both the regional²³² and other EU markets²³³. The penetration into the regional criminal markets via the second generation development is exemplified by a Moroccan group that is challenging and restructuring the dominant position of the OMCG in the Copenhagen drug market. The group is active in both smuggling of and trafficking in drugs and has been able to use serious acts of violence and threats both against rival groups and even the public in order to protect its interests.²³⁴

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Certain regional OC groups such as some OMCG, Estonian, Latvian and Polish OC groups are becoming 'bridging' groups that procure certain goods or services to specific parts of the regional market in co-operation with or supplied by the Lithuanian OC groups. Estonian OC groups co-operating with Lithuanian OC have a significant role in smuggling certain drugs to Estonia as well as in the production of synthetic drugs and the further distribution of these to the Finnish market. Their Finnish counterparts, OMCG and the networks co-operating with them, are responsible for the wholesale and distribution in Finland.²³⁵ Additionally, Lithuanian OC groups have contacts with Russian OC groups supplying BMK facilitated by the use of bogus companies. Polish OC groups participate in the smuggling of the precursor while Latvian OC groups secure the cross-border shipments. Additionally, there are indications of a Latvian motorcycle club smuggling cocaine and amphetamine from Lithuania to Latvia.²³⁶

Immigration processes from Lithuania and Poland to Western Europe will strengthen the creation of ethnic communities, (the fringes of) which can be exploited for support, work force, camouflage, and proceeds (extortion, kidnap, etc.) by Lithuanian and Polish OC groups. This could further strengthen the role of these groups in the destination markets of Western European countries.

The North-East region of the EU is both a transit area and an important destination market for various commodities ranging from smuggled and counterfeit cigarettes to synthetic drugs. Lithuanian OC groups are acting as important traffickers in many criminal markets in various geographical locations, often also beyond the borders of the North-East region. In some cases Lithuanian OC groups co-operate and supply goods to some Polish, Latvian and Estonian OC groups and OMCG and related groups. These groups can then act as 'bridging groups', procuring goods from the global markets for specific sections of the regional market. The Lithuanian OC groups as independent criminal actors, but also as main links to EU and global criminal markets for other regional groups, constitute a major threat.

6.3. The South-East region

A



number of factors substantially differentiate the South-East region from the other three. In fact, several southeast European countries are not members of the EU. Furthermore, with the notable exception of Greece, all Member States in the region have joined the EU only recently or very recently. Finally, modern history in the area has evolved with different and unparalleled dynamics compared to Western Europe and, in many instances, also North-Eastern Europe. These factors, combined with the geographical location,

substantially affect the OC situation.

The long wave of the liberalisation process that followed the fall of the Iron Curtain, together with the social, political and economic consequences of the Western Balkan conflicts, still influence the OC scenario in southeast Europe.

OC beyond the Iron Curtain was quite different from that in Western Europe. Totalitarian control of the state and ruthless enforcement of the law forced domestic OC groups to emigrate towards Western Europe or North America, or to co-operate with secret and security services in clandestine and criminal operations, being rewarded with money and power.²³⁷ After the fall of the southeast European Communist regimes, such situation permitted to former oligarchs, deviated members of state services and OC groups to exploit the economic liberalisation and related privatisation of state assets, and to irrupt as protagonists into the newly introduced free market economy. Although time has passed, and tremendous progress has been made in most of southeast Europe, in several countries that ‘political-business-criminal nexus’ still remains, at least in part, and is one of the main strengths of southeast European OC groups.²³⁸ Being part of such a powerful system provides, at the same time, an effective shield against arrest and prosecution, a privileged position in the process of privatisation of state assets and on public tenders, and a domineering position on the criminal underworld, including foreign OC groups trafficking along the Balkan route.

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The strategic control of the Balkan route is another significant strength, maximised by the increasing flows of illicit trafficking between Western Europe and Asia. Drugs and THB are the most lucrative illicit trades going towards the EU, while in the opposite direction the most trafficked goods are drugs and stolen vehicles.²³⁹ The Balkan route links the OC situation in southeast Europe with that of the three other European regions. In fact, all transnational OC groups in need to utilize the Balkan route have to find an agreement with Balkan OC groups, which gain a double benefit from their position of advantage: a share in the profits, and the possibility to establish high-level criminal alliances through which they can attain new markets and get involved into new types of crime. The central role of the Balkan route is amplified by the fact that all southeast European Member States share frontiers with non-EU countries, thus placing borders among the main facilitating factors of crime in the region.

Other important facilitating factors are the black market and the attitude of the people towards it. In fact, during the last several decades the black market was the only way for most of the citizens in southeast Europe to get hold of many, often necessary, commodities. That long practice developed in them a special talent in dealing with the black economy, dissolving any possible sense of guilt or wrongdoing. OC groups exploit that self-absolving attitude of the clients of the black markets, and through that channel provide them with a growing assortment of products and services.

Ethnic Albanian OC groups are active all over Europe, including southeast European Member States,²⁴⁰ mainly dealing with drug trafficking or THB. Their specialisation in the last stage of THB, namely in the exploitation of the prostitution of women often trafficked by other OC groups, is widely reported.²⁴¹ Ethnic Albanian OC groups tend to smoothly gain access to new criminal environments, offering themselves as service providers for powerful and well established domestic groups, often being sub-contracted some criminal activities once they prove their skill and efficiency. However, ethnic Albanian OC groups avoid establishing tight links with domestic OC groups, preferring to remain logistically and operationally independent, as the Albanian communities – widespread throughout the EU – provide them with support, personnel and protection.²⁴²

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Romanian OC groups are usually not very big in size, but they are recently displaying a tendency toward expansion in dimension and scope.²⁴³ They are involved, in several Member States, in drug trafficking, THB and – due to the high IT literacy of the younger Romanian generations – in credit and debit card fraud.²⁴⁴ Romanian OC groups involved in THB exploit not only women in the sex industry, but also children, forced to labour as thieves and beggars.²⁴⁵ Access to the EU has facilitated intra-EU movements also for Romanian OC groups, increasing their impact in many Member States. In Italy, their criminal escalation is similar to that of ethnic Albanian OC groups, with a rapid and ruthless acquisition of a growing portfolio of criminal market shares.²⁴⁶ The possible exploitation of the Constanta port at the Black Sea, which is a major international hub with intense commercial flows very difficult to control, represents another threat posed by Romanian OC groups.²⁴⁷

Bulgarian OC groups are particularly proficient – besides drug trafficking – in currency counterfeiting, credit and debit card frauds and THB. Their involvement in THB is similar, in kind if not in size, to that of Romanian OC groups, as also Bulgarian criminals have no hesitation in exploiting children forcing them to stealing and begging activities.²⁴⁸ In assessing the international dimension of Bulgarian OC groups it is necessary to consider that many OC groups labelled as Bulgarian are actually composed by ethnic Turks or Roma people.²⁴⁹ Considering the citizenship of their members, they are correctly identified as Bulgarian, but the common ethnicity permits to appreciate – in their international activities – criminal patterns which are normally associated to Turkish OC groups or to the itinerant community. A possible explanation for the minor involvement of ethnic Bulgarians in international OC is that, due to social and economic factors, domestic crime is more profitable and less risky.²⁵⁰

Turkish OC groups are routinely associated with the heroin trade, but they are involved in many other criminal fields.²⁵¹ In fact, heroin trafficking has made Turkish OC not only immensely rich, but also strictly linked with the main international OC groups and perfectly aware of all existing smuggling routes and methods, to be used for all kinds of illegal trafficking, including facilitating illegal immigration.

OC groups from Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia normally have a local or national dimension, while information is not sufficient to evaluate the threat posed by OC groups from Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro and FYROM. In the Western Balkans, however, the situation is influenced by several unique factors, in particular the still heavy presence of the international community (EU, NATO and UN) and the delicate question of the province of Kosovo.

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International organisations are a stabilising presence, but at the same time are significantly impacting on the local licit and illicit markets. In fact, a vast community of foreigners, often very well paid and therefore more affluent than locals, can hijack the legitimate market and inflate the prices. Furthermore, thousands of young people far away from home deform the demand of illicit goods and services, potentially increasing drug trafficking, THB, IPR infringements and commodity smuggling. The Kosovo issue is in stalemate, and whatever decision will be taken in the future it will not satisfy at least one side. That adds to the uncertainty of the area, and a new conflict cannot be ruled out. OC groups are fuelling the fire, parading their opportunistic nationalist façade, ready to exploit all possible opportunities as they did during previous wars.

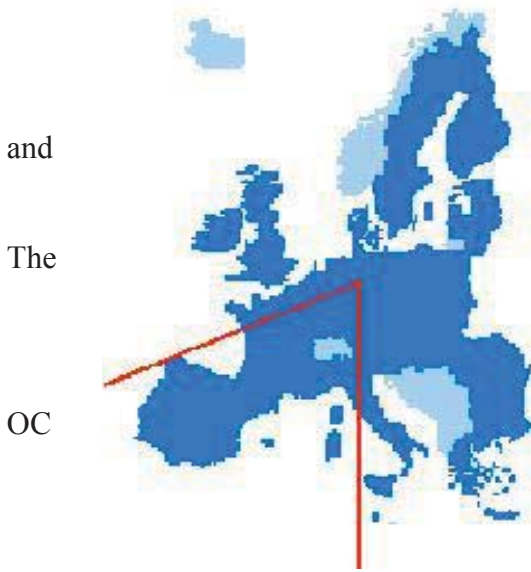
The criminal threat on southeast Europe is not limited to domestic OC groups. The Balkan route and the privatisation process, combined with the recent accession of many southeast European countries into the EU, have raised the attention of several EU and non-EU OC groups. 'Ndrangheta is reported as active in southeast Europe,²⁵² while in Italy ethnic Albanian OC groups have established, in some cases, strong business relations with 'Ndrangheta families.²⁵³ The Camorra operates in Romania, and Cosa Nostra in the whole of Eastern Europe, while Apulian OC groups interact with ethnic Albanian, Slav and Greek OC Groups.²⁵⁴ Romanian OC groups co-operate with Dutch and German criminals in trafficking heroine and ecstasy.²⁵⁵ Russians are heavily investing in construction related to the tourism industry in Croatia and Bulgaria.²⁵⁶ Southeast Europe is seen by OC groups as a land of opportunities, and the links established between OC groups along the Balkan route have a direct influence on all regions of Europe.

After the first period of general settlement, Bulgaria and Romania will join the political and economic mainstream of the EU, and will possibly switch from source countries to destination countries for illegal immigrants.²⁵⁷ That will pose new challenges and new criminal threats.

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The Western Balkans faces different, more serious problems. OC thrives in situations of uncertainty, and it is in the interest of OC groups to maintain the status quo. If decision-makers and involved blocs do not enfranchise themselves from the ethnic struggle fuelled by OC and take satisfactory decisions, there is a risk that the Western Balkans may become a renegade area in the heart of a united Europe, where OC groups will rule.

6.4. The South-West region: The Iberian Peninsula and Beyond



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Criminal activities shaping the South-West region, which includes mainly Spain, Portugal and part of France, are strictly linked with historical, cultural geographic connections with Latin America and North-West Africa.

large majority of OC groups in Portugal are mainly composed of persons from the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP)²⁵⁸. When groups are active at the international level, in most cases, members are from Africa and South America.²⁵⁹ One of the characteristics of the

Spanish crime environment is the important role played by criminals from Maghreb, not only for their dominance in hashish trafficking but also for their activities in synthetic drugs and crimes against property. Another peculiarity is the activities of South American criminals that, besides their involvement in cocaine trafficking, are noticeably engaged in heroin trafficking, express kidnappings, home burglaries and other crimes against property.²⁶⁰ In addition, Latin American street gangs are causing great social alarm.²⁶¹

Georgian and Russian criminals are reported to launder significant amounts of money in Spain.²⁶²

In general, due to targeting by the Spanish law enforcement agencies, Costa del Sol is losing its importance for East European OC, but traditionally it was one of the preferred areas for these groups, where top criminals were residing and wanted persons were hiding.²⁶³ It is also worth mentioning the detection of extortion activities perpetrated by Lithuanian (in Spain), Ukrainian and Moldovan (in Portugal) criminals against fellow-nationals.²⁶⁴

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With regard to cocaine trafficking, OC groups detected in Portugal are usually heterogeneous and are composed of Portuguese, French, Spanish, Italian, Moroccan, Angolan, Cape Verdean, Nigerian, Colombian, Venezuelan and Brazilian criminals. The significant presence of EU citizens may be linked to the fact that Portugal is an important point of entry and transit for large amounts of drugs having, in particular, Spain, Italy and The Netherlands as destinations.²⁶⁵ When it comes to the groups' composition, a similar situation is reported for Spain, where criminals dealing with cocaine trafficking tend to be Spanish and South American (Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina) in association with nationals from other Member States, namely Italian, French, British, and Portuguese ones.²⁶⁶ The rising involvement in Spain of Bulgarian citizens²⁶⁷ is worth mentioning for its possible impact on the development of the criminal environment in South-Eastern Europe. Attention is also focused on the increasing presence and activities of Romanian criminals, mostly members of the Romanian communities in Spain, and their evolving role as couriers and distributors of cocaine.²⁶⁸ This could also be understood as an indicator of an increasing activity or changing strategy by Nigerian traffickers because they resort to recruiting European citizens as couriers, in order to make detection more difficult.²⁶⁹

In the end, indigenous criminals from the South-West region maintain a central role in this flow also because South American OC groups engaged in cocaine production are usually not interested in taking care of the delivery and sale in the EU.²⁷⁰ This brings a high degree of flexibility to this criminal market.

The main facilitating factors that contribute to the peculiarities of the criminal environment in the South-West region are globalization and borders and the misuse of the transport sector.

The Iberian Peninsula is still a crucial crossroad for cocaine produced in Colombia and transiting from other Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil, and also from the Caribbean region.²⁷¹ Cocaine gets to the Iberian Peninsula in significant amounts by sea through containers²⁷² or clandestine unloading on the vast Portuguese and Spanish²⁷³ coasts. Also Iberian airports and mail deliveries are misused.²⁷⁴

West Africa is increasingly used as transit point for South American cocaine aimed at Europe.²⁷⁵ Vulnerabilities linked to the delicate political and social situation of some countries²⁷⁶ to corruption²⁷⁷ or other law enforcement difficulties²⁷⁸ play a role in this development.

The number of West African countries²⁷⁹ touched by cocaine in transit gives considerable flexibility to OC in reacting to law enforcement efforts.²⁸⁰ Colombian nationals have settled in some of these countries, and are creating structures to cover their illicit activity.²⁸¹

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In Africa, large loads are broken down and cocaine is forwarded towards Europe both by air (also using private aircrafts²⁸²), by sea (up to France and the Netherlands, etc.) or by land up to the Maghreb region where the cannabis circuits are then exploited.²⁸³ West African OC groups continue to rely on the use of express courier consignments shipped from South America and the Caribbean to Africa, where cocaine is cumulated, re-packaged and expedited to Europe.²⁸⁴

West African countries, such as Cape Verde, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, have also been used as stopovers for cocaine transported by private aircrafts from Latin America to Europe.²⁸⁵

As it is argued later on, this growing role of Africa in cocaine trafficking can create a context in which the Iberian Peninsula or OC groups active there are increasingly bypassed by flows supplying the EU. Within this framework, the role played by France and OC groups based in this country is relevant.

Concerning the development of cannabis trafficking in the EU, two main factors are the proximity with Morocco and the Moroccan criminal presence²⁸⁶ in Spain. Opportunities for clandestine unloading using vessels or private aircrafts²⁸⁷ are very difficult to be fought by the Iberian law enforcement agencies.²⁸⁸ Furthermore, traffic between Morocco and Spain is so intense that it offers wide possibilities also for smuggling through official entry points.²⁸⁹ After unloading in Portugal or Spain, hashish is usually stored before further transportation to other EU countries, mainly by land.²⁹⁰ It is not common, but private aircrafts could be used for this onward distribution.²⁹¹

In case law enforcement pressure should make a route more difficult, easy alternatives are at hand in the Mediterranean or Atlantic areas, also in relation to increasing capabilities of vessels or aircrafts.²⁹² It is also possible that Spain will be bypassed using France as unloading place. New source or transit countries, such as Algeria and Senegal, might increase their role in cannabis trafficking.²⁹³

Moroccan OC groups will continue to consolidate their position in the cannabis markets with the aim of taking care of all phases of this criminal activity from source to destination in countries such as Spain, France and the Netherlands.²⁹⁴ These OC groups could extent their area of interest in the cocaine market, due to the existing transit of this drug from West Africa and, in particular, the exploitation of the cannabis circuit also for cocaine redistribution to the EU. This would bring a significant change to the criminal environment in Spain and possibly in other Member States. Furthermore, the accumulation of financial resources channelled both to the EU and Morocco²⁹⁵ can make these OC groups increasingly difficult to dismantle.

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Concerning the movement of people, Spain will continue to receive a significant number of irregular immigrants coming by air from Latin America, especially from Ecuador and Colombia.²⁹⁶ Portugal is a priority destination or transit point for migratory flows coming from the CPLP, among which special emphasis goes to the stream coming from Brazil.²⁹⁷ There is also intelligence pointing at the presence of Brazilian victims or illegal immigrants outside the South-West region of the EU.²⁹⁸

Points for illegal boarding towards the Iberian Peninsula,²⁹⁹ such as Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Algeria, collect migratory flows coming by land from all West Africa and beyond.³⁰⁰ Africa is used also by immigrants from Asia³⁰¹, reaching countries such as Mauritania or Senegal by sea, air or land. The international human smuggling networks also use Moroccan OC to smuggle immigrants from the Middle East and Asia into the EU in the final phase of the process.³⁰² South American and West African nationalities are reported in Spain among victims and criminals related to THB.³⁰³ In addition, with specific reference to France, Nigerian OC groups dealing with THB for sexual exploitation are among the most active, but Spain, together with Italy, is a main transit country for them.³⁰⁴

Extortion against illegal immigrants by Moroccan OC groups seems to be a peculiar feature that can easily blur the border between facilitation of illegal immigration and THB.³⁰⁵

An increase in migratory flows from Africa is foreseeable in the near future, taking into consideration a high number of would-be illegal immigrants on the African continent.³⁰⁶

Developments in Africa might, at least during a transitory period, bring more pressure to bear to Europe, favouring an increase in intercontinental rather than internal migration flows³⁰⁷.

West Africa is currently one of the main destinations for stolen vehicles. Stolen vehicles transiting through South-West Europe, from harbours located on the western bank of the Mediterranean Sea, are mainly bound to the Maghreb countries, at least as a first step.³⁰⁸ The geographical proximity and intense traffic play again a crucial role. Other parts of Western Africa are directly reached by flows from important harbours in Northern Europe and this route is apparently more structured.³⁰⁹ Spanish ports on the Mediterranean coast receive intense commercial flows from Asia. Cigarettes, which are quite often counterfeit and meant for the British market, are smuggled via containers from Asia to the busy Mediterranean ports.³¹⁰ Portugal is reporting an increase in transit of smuggled tobacco using then logistics in Spain for further distribution to other EU countries.³¹¹

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Counterfeit products are imported from Asia to Europe through Greek, Italian (Naples) ports and Rotterdam and from there, through road traffic, to Spain. Valencia (Spain) also is a port of destination.³¹² Portugal detected a high increase of containers from China and other Asian countries carrying counterfeit goods. Dutch and Spanish ports are used as transit points for counterfeit goods bound for Portugal.³¹³

The geographical position of Portugal and close relations between this country and its former colonies makes it attractive also for VAT fraud because this gives credibility to the fraudulent transactions.³¹⁴

6.5. Nodes of attraction: Criminal hubs

As introduced by the 2007 OCTA, a 'criminal hub' is a conceptual entity that is generated by a combination of factors such as proximity to major destination markets, geographic location, infrastructure, types of OC groups and migration processes concerning key criminals or OC groups in general. A criminal hub receives flows from a number of sources and spreads their effects in the EU thereby forging criminal markets and creating opportunities for the growth of OC groups that are able to profit from these dynamics.

The North-West, North-East, South-West, South-East and Southern criminal hubs are discussed below.

Opportunities given by large airports and harbours, well developed road infrastructures and financial systems contribute to forge **the North-West criminal hub**³¹⁵, which revolves around criminals and OC groups active in the area approximating The Netherlands and Belgium.

Dutch and Belgian ports and Dutch and French³¹⁶ airports play a crucial role, for example, for trafficking in counterfeit goods.³¹⁷

Harbours in the North West hub are important transit points from where cocaine is then distributed in Europe.³¹⁸ West African and South European countries are often used as intermediate stops before cocaine finally gets to the Netherlands.³¹⁹

Many OC groups forward cocaine into the North-West hub by air. Because of the strict inspection policy adopted by the Dutch authorities³²⁰, cocaine is increasingly flown to German, French and Belgian airports. Nevertheless, from there land routes are often used to complete transport to The Netherlands.³²¹

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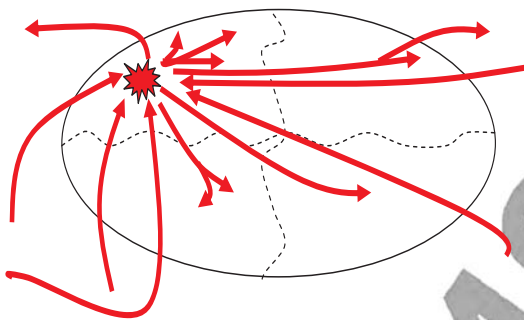
Heroin trafficking throughout the EU seems still dominated by Turkish OC groups.³²² Heroin reaches Germany through land routes from Turkey and ferry links to Italy and large consignments are often meant for onward transport to The Netherlands³²³ where Turkish OC groups dominate the wholesale function³²⁴.

The North-West criminal hub attracts also hashish from Morocco for further distribution to other EU countries. Moroccan criminals have a crucial role in this criminal field. For example, with specific reference to The Netherlands, hashish is usually stored temporarily in Spain before being forwarded to this country in trucks or by sea in containers.³²⁵

Criminal groups active in the North-West hub are major producers of synthetic drugs. Concerning ecstasy they supply basically all EU while, for amphetamine, OC groups active in the Baltic region and Poland are also significantly present.³²⁶

Precursors for the production of synthetic drugs are smuggled in the North-West hub primarily from China,³²⁷ although there is still a significant intelligence gap with regard to trafficking routes and

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modus operandi.³²⁸ The United States is one of destinations for synthetic drugs produced in The Netherlands, albeit not as important as the UK, Germany and Spain.³²⁹ On the other hand, ecstasy trafficking in the United States is carried also by Asian OC groups.³³⁰ This combination of factors suggests that the involvement of Chinese

OC groups can go beyond the simple supply of precursors.³³¹

British and Irish criminals based in the North-West hub act as facilitators for drugs deliveries to the United Kingdom and Ireland. This is probably one of the factors leading to multi-commodity shipments. Established Irish OC groups are starting to bypass the criminal hubs and becoming active in the source countries.³³²

As a result of the above mentioned dynamics, the North-West hub³³³ will continue to be a major drugs supplier for the Benelux countries, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.³³⁴ Its influence extends to the Nordic countries,³³⁵ especially with reference to cocaine and cannabis products, and basically all EU and further for synthetic drugs.

In the picture above, the concept of the North-West criminal hub is visualised as it is described in the paragraphs above. The arrows do not represent precise routes but rather factors shaping the criminal hub.

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Criminal groups active in **the North-East criminal hub**, which is located in the Baltic countries, work as a bridge³³⁶ between criminals operating, in particular, in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and the EU criminal environment. They look both towards the west and the rest of the EU, and towards the east and beyond the borders of the EU.

From the east, they can get heroin.³³⁷ Thanks to connections with Russia and Central Asia, OC groups active in Latvia³³⁸ and Lithuania³³⁹ are able to get involved in the provision of this drug to the EU. Furthermore, Russia is a direct source for the Finnish market and Estonia features as a potential transit country for this flow.³⁴⁰ It is possible that especially Lithuanian OC groups will evolve into traffickers to some Eastern European countries.³⁴¹

Criminal groups active in the North-East hub look east beyond the EU borders also to get synthetic drugs precursors that can also be shipped to the North-West hub. Lithuanian OC groups have secure contacts with Russian OC which supply precursors.³⁴² Concerning amphetamine, there appears to be a complex setup of players in Estonia and Lithuania dealing with production, large-scale distribution and smuggling.³⁴³ This production is mainly channelled to the Nordic countries, possibly reaching Iceland.³⁴⁴ Albeit not a major supplier for the whole EU market, Lithuania is also a source for synthetic drugs for other Member States, such as Ireland where they are supplied to local Lithuanian OC groups.³⁴⁵ However, it must be taken into consideration that Lithuanian criminals are prominent in terms of trafficking to Northern Europe of synthetic drugs produced in the North-West hub.³⁴⁶

A similar situation features in the cigarette smuggling field. The Baltic countries keep on being transit areas for smuggled cigarettes mainly sourced from or via Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. In particular, Lithuania is used for transit of counterfeit and smuggled cigarettes brought from Russia and Ukraine³⁴⁷ and also for cigarettes of western production meant for the Russian market but diverted to the western markets. Lithuanian OC groups smuggle cigarettes also via Finland.³⁴⁸

As already mentioned, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia represent an important pool of potential victims of trafficking or illegal immigrants and OC in the Baltic region is prevalent in facilitating their illegal entry or trafficking into and within the EU.

Besides towards the Nordic countries and other Member States, OC groups active in the North-East hub look eastward for another important destination market. They tend to play an intermediary role with reference to illegal flows originating in the west.

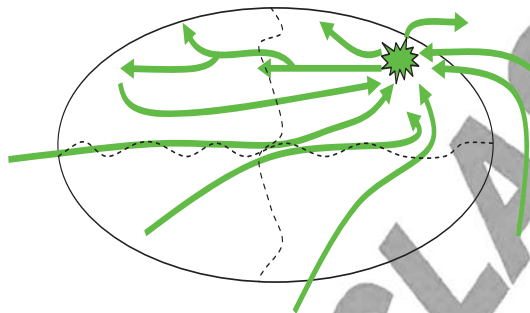
Ecstasy is transported to Lithuania from The Netherlands and Belgium, then it is shipped also to Russia and Belarus.³⁴⁹

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Open borders within the EU created convenient transit routes linking Spain, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and Lithuania. Consequently, cocaine is trafficked also to Latvia, Belarus and Russia via Lithuania. The role of Lithuanian OC groups in international cocaine trafficking is getting increasingly important and Russia and Belarus will be their main destination markets. Lithuanian criminals are settled in source and distribution countries and are also starting to smuggle cocaine from or via Africa. They control both the wholesale and the retail trade in Lithuania.³⁵⁰

Lithuania is part of the transit route for cannabis products originating from Spain or Morocco and meant also for Russia. Cannabis is most often taken from The Netherlands or Belgium and channelled via land routes to Lithuania. The role of Lithuanian criminals in cannabis smuggling from Morocco, Spain and The Netherlands also to Russia is of high importance.³⁵¹ In Latvia, cannabis products are imported, besides from The Netherlands and Spain, from Lithuania.³⁵² For Estonian drug traffickers, Lithuania has become a warehouse of cannabis products which are then exported to Russia.³⁵³ On the other hand, Estonian OC groups active, for example, in Spain and Germany control a substantial share of large scale cannabis resin trafficking to Finland.³⁵⁴ This suggests the capability of sourcing drugs directly from the South-West hub.

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North-East hub is also used as a transit to Russia counterfeit goods from Asia.³⁵⁵

In the end, even if the role of OC groups from other Baltic countries should not be underestimated, it seems to emerge a central role for Lithuania and Lithuanian OC. Their activities are not confined

to the EU but are increasing all over the globe. The increasing emigration of Lithuanian nationals, including criminals, creates possibilities for the establishment of new contacts.³⁵⁶

The South-West criminal hub is based on links of the Iberian Peninsula with South America and northwest Africa. However, its focus is shifting towards the latter.

This shift is caused by the increasing flow of cocaine from South America towards West Africa.

This can create increasing opportunities for cocaine trafficking from the African continent directly to the EU bypassing the Iberian Peninsula or OC groups active there.

Within this framework, the role played by France, where cocaine trafficking is controlled by major OC groups³⁵⁷, is relevant. French criminals are operating in the production regions or in the transit zones in order to ensure drugs exportation to the French drugs market.³⁵⁸

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Several African countries were French colonies in the past (Mauritania, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Gabon) and many French OC groups have settled in Western Africa (Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania). This will not necessarily lead to the bypassing of Spain or the OC groups active there, especially when sea or land routes are used.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, trafficking from Western Africa by plane is more likely to generate such bypassing.³⁶⁰

Additionally, cocaine flows from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean get directly to France by air or sea from Latin America and the Caribbean region.³⁶¹

The situation outlined above could have a negative influence on the role of the Iberian Peninsula as transit country for cocaine ending up in Europe. In other words, West Africa is growing as an immediate source of cocaine for Europe and the direct channel from Latin America and the Caribbean region by air is lively and not limited to the Iberian Peninsula. This might weaken the importance of Spanish and Portuguese direct links with South America.

Within this framework, historical and cultural links (including language) between France, West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean region may facilitate direct provision by French criminals. In addition, the influence and potential for further development of the role of African networks in supplying directly different Member States' markets from Africa must not be underestimated.³⁶²

The Iberian Peninsula is likely to keep its level of importance within the South West hub with reference to cannabis trafficking even if unloading operations are starting to reach France.³⁶³ As already mentioned, Moroccan OC groups will continue to consolidate their position in the cannabis markets and could extend their area of interest in the cocaine field.

In order to assess the full potential of these Moroccan OC groups, it should also be taken into consideration that North Africa is a destination for synthetic drugs. Moroccan criminals are

significantly involved in synthetic drugs

trafficking in the North-West criminal hub and

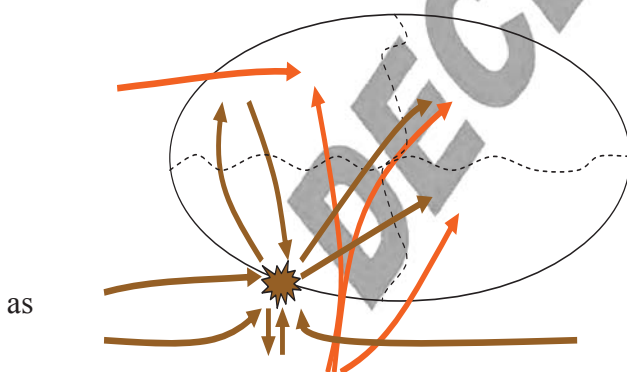
common origin or ethnicity may facilitate co-

operation with criminals active in Spain where

people from the Maghreb are already mentioned

transporters and distributors.³⁶⁴

Another indicator suggesting West Africa as the



real focus of the South-West criminal hub comes from the analysis of the migratory pressure on Spain and Portugal. Points for illegal boarding towards the Iberian Peninsula collect migratory flows coming by land from all West Africa and beyond. Africa is also used by immigrants from Asia.

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In the end, West Africa will develop into an important criminal hub for the EU, increasingly attracting flows also from the east and not only from the Atlantic side. This could happen, for instance, with counterfeit goods from China and illegal immigrants or heroin³⁶⁵ from Asia. With reference to heroin, for example, this could be a development of the already existing route from Pakistan to Europe transiting East Africa.³⁶⁶ On the other hand, the intention to diversify points of departure from Africa might lead to an eastward movement of cocaine within the African continent.³⁶⁷

The recent eastward expansion of the EU borders to the Black Sea could alter the current equilibrium and could potentially establish a new, **South-East criminal hub** in this area.³⁶⁸

National borders lacking sufficient protection in the South-East region, as well as inexpensive waterways which connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus, and with the heart of Western Europe via the Danube, naturally make it very attractive for illegal shipments.³⁶⁹

Following this, Romanian criminals might be benefiting mainly from their favourable geographic position, contributing to turn Romania into an important point for illegal flows from Eastern Europe and Asia. For example, they will be prevalent in profiting from the pool of potential THB victims or illegal immigrants in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Russia.

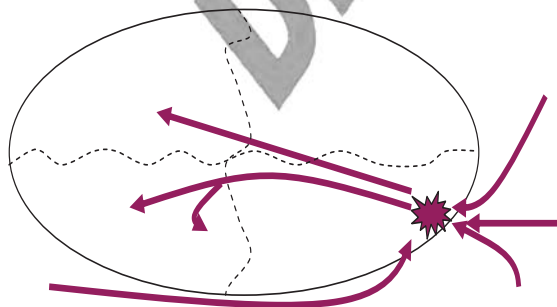
Moreover, concerning the evolving situation in the Black Sea region regarding facilitation of illegal immigration and THB, one of the main issues is that this region is an entry gate for significant flows of illegal immigrants from southwest Asia and the Middle East.

With regard to Romania, Constanta harbour is a significant vulnerability. It is a major European harbour and it will most likely be exploited by OC groups for shipping goods meant for Romania and other Member States. For instance, an increase in counterfeit goods, especially textiles from China, is already reported. Another example refers to Romanian criminals ensuring the transit of cocaine from South America through Constanta harbour in its way to Western Europe.³⁷⁰

Although the majority of heroin trafficked by Turkish OC groups is still transported via the

different branches of the Balkan route, a considerable and increasing amount is channelled via the Black Sea route. Sometimes, Turkish OC groups bypass the Turkish territory.³⁷¹ A significant use of the territories of Ukraine and Russia to direct heroin towards the EU is reported, pointing to an eastward movement

of the Balkan route.³⁷² In this context, Romania and Ukraine are expected to gain further importance as transit and storage countries.



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Bulgarian OC groups appear to be the most Middle East oriented. This could be due, at least in part, to the geographic position and the significant links with Turkey.³⁷³

In the end, the presence of the South-East criminal hub is confirmed. The threat from this hub will grow in the near future.

The Southern criminal hub is centred on the role played by the main Italian OC groups. These highly organised criminal groups tend to take advantage of their pervasive presence to try to control certain social and economic dynamics in some geographic areas. Opportunities are provided by ready criminal markets in the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa.³⁷⁴

Certain OC groups based in Italy have the capability of sourcing cocaine and heroin directly from the areas of production or transit.³⁷⁵ Within this context, it is interesting to note that Italy is one of the main destinations of large amounts of drugs transiting from Portugal. Furthermore, Italian criminals are often members of OC groups trafficking drugs in Spain or Portugal.³⁷⁶ This intelligence suggests that even if major drugs consignments must transit the Iberian Peninsula, Italian OC groups might own them from the source, being financiers and organisers, directly or through their representatives in Spain or Portugal. These premises may not be considered to be enough for this assessment, but a better understanding of these dynamics is crucial because they are central to the criminal hubs definition. The same is true about the destination of cocaine reaching Italy. It is not clear to what extent it is also meant for other countries.³⁷⁷ The extensive network of international contacts outlined below suggests a positive answer but it is not enough.

Concerning heroin, the largest deliveries get to Italy overland or by sea mainly from Albania, Turkey and the region of Kosovo.³⁷⁸ Ferry lines from Turkey, Greece and Albania are misused.³⁷⁹

In the drugs field, the main Italian OC groups profit in general from the activities of foreign criminals maintaining the leadership in this sector. Nevertheless, OC groups from Albania and the region of Kosovo are crucial drug suppliers for Apulian OC.³⁸⁰ Again, the degree of control of Italian OC over this drugs flow, logistical issues such as storage and the extent to which such a flow is directed to other countries are key elements in assessing the existence of a criminal hub also from the heroin market perspective.

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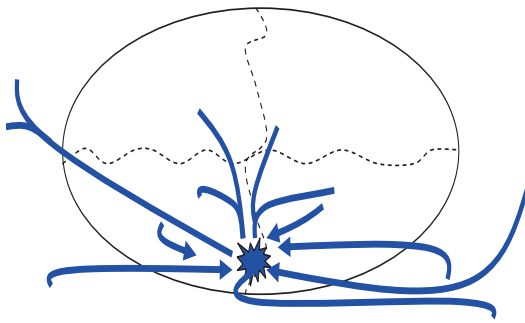
Criminal groups based in Italy have important links in other Member States in both the western part of the EU – including Spain and The Netherlands, which are at the core of other criminal hubs – and its eastern part.³⁸¹ Furthermore, it is reported that in Germany, Italian criminals are frequently involved in drugs-related crimes and are often found in leading positions within the OC groups.³⁸² It is also interesting to notice that Italy is among the countries with the majority of origins or destinations of financial resources moved through Luxembourg by criminal organisations.³⁸³ Italian nationals (reference is general and not specifically to criminals) are also among the main customers of the financial centre Liechtenstein, where offshore business activities appear to be particularly attractive for illicit money.³⁸⁴ Liechtenstein is closely integrated with the major Swiss financial centres.³⁸⁵ Also Switzerland is a country of activity for Italian OC groups, especially for drugs trafficking, cigarette smuggling and money laundering.³⁸⁶ Intelligence suggests that Italian OC groups have connections with Romanian OC groups in the money laundering field.³⁸⁷ The United States³⁸⁸, Canada and Australia are also reached by the above mentioned links.³⁸⁹ These links together with the already mentioned contacts in illicit goods producing countries and transit countries provide for the potential to play a role on the world scene.

Italy features among the production countries for counterfeit goods. In addition, many counterfeit products, including cigarettes, are detected within the intense flow of containers from China to Italian ports. In the counterfeiting sector, Camorra has established a partnership with Chinese criminals³⁹⁰ and is reported to traffic Chinese counterfeit goods into the United States³⁹¹. In Spain, Senegalese OC groups buy Chinese counterfeits via Italian OC groups linked to Camorra.³⁹² In the context of counterfeiting, it must also be stressed that significant amounts of the counterfeit banknotes circulating in France, Spain and Belgium are produced in Italy in the region of Naples,³⁹³ which is one of the areas affected by the highest and qualified presence of Camorra.³⁹⁴

Italy's geographical position at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea has increasingly made it a transit point for smuggled tobacco meant for other Member States. Cigarettes smuggled into Italy mainly come from China, the United Arab Emirates, Greece and Egypt.³⁹⁵ This does not necessarily mean that the sites of production are located in all these countries. For example, since 2005, there is no reliable information about illegal production in Greece.³⁹⁶ A new pattern is emerging with cigarettes being transported from Eastern Europe to Italy, with destination Campania where Camorra is most active.³⁹⁷ There is intelligence suggesting that Italian OC groups based in Campania co-operate with Polish³⁹⁸ and Romanian³⁹⁹ OC in this field.

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above mentioned intelligence seems to suggest the main OC groups based in Italy are not passively dependent on other EU criminal hubs the provision of drugs and other criminal opportunities, but that they have a more active in relation to the rest of the EU and beyond. If

this hypothesis is true, more reporting on these OC groups by the Member States would be expected. On the other hand, it must be taken into consideration that they could pursue their interests in other countries, especially at the more risky execution level, through criminals or OC groups that are more difficult to be linked to them. The impact of the Southern criminal hub on the EU might therefore be underestimated.

6.5.1. *The interaction between the criminal hubs*

The tide generated by the North-West criminal hub loses its strength in relation to distance from its origin. Concerning heroin, the direct supply from the Balkan route and ethnic Albanian OC groups is dominant in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Switzerland⁴⁰⁰. Also Italy, Austria and Slovenia⁴⁰¹ seem to be directly affected in a significant way by the Balkan route and trafficking by ethnic Albanians. These countries are also used by ethnic Albanian OC groups as transit countries for supplies to other Member States. This situation does not represent a significant challenge to the dominance of Turkish OC groups in the western part of the EU but contributes to set the limits of the influence of the North-West criminal hub. Also Romania⁴⁰² and Bulgaria⁴⁰³ are outside this area of influence, at least for the heroin case, but there trafficking activities are still under the dominance of Turkish OC groups.⁴⁰⁴ The existence of the North-East hub is another factor limiting the area of influence of the North-West hub in this field.

Concerning cocaine trafficking, the limits of the influence of the North-West hub are even more blurred due to the absence of a clear alternative such as in the heroin case.⁴⁰⁵ In addition, the increasing role of West Africa may be seen as a factor facilitating OC groups that aim at directly supplying different Member States. The picture concerning Eastern Europe is then quite varied. For example, The Netherlands is a main source country for Romania and Slovakia. With reference to the latter also South American and Caribbean countries can be mentioned and trafficking is mainly dominated by ethnic Albanian criminals.⁴⁰⁶ In Romania there are a few OC groups importing some cocaine from source countries, but then exporting it to The Netherlands.⁴⁰⁷

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The activities of Bulgarian criminals in Spain are becoming noticeable.⁴⁰⁸ The Czech Republic is mainly supplied by air couriers from the Caribbean. Nigerian and South American OC groups play an important role.⁴⁰⁹

Also the efforts of Lithuanian OC groups to develop direct channels of cocaine supply from South America and Africa and to establish themselves as suppliers for the Baltic region, Russia and Belarus contribute to set borders for the areas of influence of the other criminal hubs. Nevertheless, it cannot be excluded that they are somehow instrumental to these dynamics because of possible roles played by their infrastructures, such as harbours and airports.

The relationship among criminal hubs in the cannabis market seems to be rather different. There are significant synergies between the South-West and North-west hubs and the North East hub, because the first ones are regular points of supply for the latter. This may be due to the strong control exerted by Moroccan OC groups on this criminal field. This sort of monopoly is only marginally affected by EU-grown cannabis products but their production is spreading.

In the attempt to better understand the current and future interaction of the European criminal hubs, the following simplified scheme can be used.

The South-West and the emerging South-East criminal hubs are mainly based on their geographical position and links with crucial source countries outside the EU. The North-West hub is mainly characterised by its centrality and good connections with the richest part of the EU. The North-East hub is heavily dependent on criminal interchanges with Russia and Ukraine and the capability of OC groups active in the hub to attract and manage such flows. The Southern criminal hub is mainly based on the structural and functional features of the OC groups active there.

The United Kingdom and Ireland are mainly destination markets similar to the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries and France are also, to some extent, transit areas. The 'transit' feature is more central with reference to Germany, Austria and Poland. Regions revolving around these countries are not part of the listed criminal hubs but are complementary to them, mainly representing destination markets and criminal highways linking the different parts of the EU.

It could be argued that Poland and OC groups active there should be seen as a more integral part of the North-East hub. There they might be or become an alternative focus of the hub itself, undermining the central role of Lithuania and Lithuanian OC groups. This argument only confirms the explanatory power of the criminal hubs model itself, being able of streamlining the discussion on the basis of a common understanding of these complex dynamics.

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On the basis of such a scheme, The North-East and South-East criminal hubs could be seen as competitors and the growth of the latter may impact negatively on the first. The development of the South-East criminal hub could also affect the role of the Iberian Peninsula within the South-West hub, also taking into consideration that the focus of the latter seems to be moving towards West Africa.

These dynamics are not going to weaken the North-West hub, because the dominance of its infrastructure and its central position within the richest part of the EU are factors that are not going to change in the near future. A similar assessment refers to the development of the Southern hub, because it is primarily based on the characteristics of the main OC groups that are active there together with their capability of operating worldwide and of creating advantageous synergies with other EU and non-EU OC groups.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the OCTA is to help identify priorities for the entire EU in order to promote operational co-operation to dismantle OC groups rather than just temporarily disrupt their criminal activities. Such priorities should be taken into consideration by the Member States and international organisations when they take decisions on their goals and resource allocation.

The criminal hubs outlined in the OCTA are key elements to the achievement of this objective. This perspective focuses on criminal activities carried out, or OC groups based in a Member State but having negative effects on several others. The OCTA identifies the situations that have the greatest impact on OC in the EU and labels them the North-West, the North-East, the South-West, the South-East and the Southern criminal hubs.

The Member States where a criminal hub is established need full co-operation from other EU countries. This means that the targeting of criminals and criminal activities perpetrated outside these Member States, but functional to the criminal hub, should be done on the basis of their true nature, origin and impact.

This joint effort is crucial for the Member States in which the criminal hub is established, in its fight to root out a phenomenon that is otherwise continuously renewed and strengthened by criminal activities abroad. This consideration is valid both when the criminal chain is managed by a single OC group and when several OC groups are involved in it. For example, in drugs trafficking, wholesale activities carried out in the criminal hub depend on the success of retail operations in the location of the hub and other Member States. In this framework, the fact that this chain is controlled by one or more OC groups is not crucial.

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It is important that investigations, on one or more OC groups, are carried out with the common objective of targeting all EU rings of this chain, always including the ring located in the criminal hub.

On the other hand, this joint effort is crucial for the other Member States affected by the criminal hub. Without full international co-operation, they cannot disrupt criminal activities or dismantle criminal groups that are fed by or rooted in the criminal hub. In the absence of such joint effort, law enforcement action will not reach its full potential to counter the threat and reduce the harm.

Thus, targeting wholesale activities in the hubs and retail operations linked to them also in other Member States will reinforce one another to lessen the threat and reduce the harm. To use a parallel from the business world, through such joint targeting the shops will be closed and the market will be severely curtailed. Focus should be on the criminal hubs, and activities throughout the EU should be aimed at jointly targeting them.

An interesting parallel can be found with money laundering. Assets seizure is vital for the dismantling of a criminal group but money laundering activities are often carried out beyond the borders of the Member State where the predicate offence is perpetrated. If these money laundering activities are not adequately addressed by the other affected Member States, several negative effects will follow. The criminal group will grow in strength in the Member State of origin because its financial resources are out of reach, or will flow back with little possibility of linking them to their criminal owners. This offers an opportunity to the OC group to expand its criminal activities and to infiltrate local economies and societies in the Member State of origin. Conversely, in the other affected Member States where the money laundering operations are carried out, the same criminal group will increasingly have the chance to penetrate both legal and illegal markets.

The criminal hubs approach calls for the alignment of national priorities on the basis of a transnational threat assessment. International co-operation should not be interpreted only as providing assistance to an investigation owned by and in the interest of another Member States. International co-operation must – more importantly – be interpreted as a joint investigative activity with common objectives and adequate priorities and resources, especially when law enforcement activities are targeting crimes and criminals that are functional to a criminal hub.

To support efficient law enforcement operations in and between the Member States, increased collection of data on transnational OC activities is necessary, including information available in private companies.

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The OC group typology that has been developed in the OCTA framework is another significant step in aligning priorities at the EU level. In every Member State the criminal environment is based on a combination of EU-based, non-EU-based OC groups and intermediary situations (groups positioned between EU-based and non-EU-based types). This way of addressing OC groups on the basis of their structural and functional features goes beyond the clustering of criminals, and the consequent priority-setting, merely based on their ethnicity or origin. The categories EU-based, non-EU-based and intermediary situations are valid for every Member State and are based on indicators, such as the international dimension, the use of influence, etc., that are directly linked to the threat to be assessed and countered.

Various developments will have a significant influence in the future dynamics of the EU criminal environment.

The criminal diagonal linking the South-East and the North-West European regions, traditionally focused on the heroin flow, is heavily affected by combinations of non-EU-based OC groups and intermediary situations, where Turkish criminals maintain the leading role. Some OC groups pertaining to this context may progress further towards an EU-based strategy. On the other hand, OC groups dominated by ethnic Albanian criminals seem more prone to keeping a non-EU-based position.

Such combinations of non-EU-based OC groups and intermediary situations are emerging also with reference to certain criminal flows such as trafficking in cannabis and cocaine pressing on the EU southern borders from Africa. Here, criminals from North-West Africa, such as Moroccan OC groups, are growing in importance especially in the western part of the EU.

In the eastern parts of Europe, this bridging role is played more by EU-based OC groups, such as Lithuanian or Romanian ones. They will exploit their criminal activities, such as THB, facilitation of illegal immigration or smuggling in highly taxed goods, to consolidate their strategic interests in the regions of origin.

The role of the EU-based OC groups is central also in Western Europe where they must face the competition of the intermediary situations, especially in criminal markets requiring the provision of illicit goods from certain regions outside the EU. Nevertheless, their role is practically unchallenged in certain criminal fields such as fraud, where the specific features of EU-based OC groups, for instance the use of influence or legitimate business structures, are more crucial. The above mentioned evolution of intermediary situations could bring changes also in this respect.

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OC groups are highly flexible and opportunistic. They are involved in a wide array of crimes, across many borders, instead of focusing on a particular criminal market. In general, administrative borders are regularly exploited by OC groups to hinder law enforcement activities. This presents a threat to law enforcement targeting transnational OC and requires horizontal responses, allowing for the exchange of data and full co-operation between specialised units. The notion that OC groups limit their activities to distinct markets is increasingly obsolete, upheld more for administrative purposes than as a reflection of criminal trends.

In the end, with reference to the criminal hubs feeding into the OC environment in the EU and to the types of criminal groups composing it, a common understanding is the necessary precondition for the alignment of Member State priorities. This is provided by the OCTA. Priorities in using the available international co-operation instruments should be fixed in accordance to these findings. This way, the fight against OC will be in an even better position to reach its full potential, and law enforcement will be better positioned to further support the upholding and strengthening of an area of justice, freedom and security.

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NOTES

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- 1 EDOC# 193246 (2007) ‘The OCTA Methodology’.
- 2 Doc. 14959/01 CRIMORG 133 (2001), ‘Proposed Action Plan to study organised crime on European level’.
- 3 The acronym PEST refers to political, economic, social and technological factors.
- 4 This chapter is built upon the typology defined in the 2007 OCTA. For this purpose data on 341 OC groups reported by MS was used. 30 groups were discarded due to only partial data or failure to qualify with the OC group criteria. All seven indicators were introduced to the typology but the defining one is the international dimension in relation to where the leaders and assets of the group are located. The typology is not based on a statistical approach but is built and used from an empirical perspective to support the qualitative findings. The defining factor of the categorisation is the functional dimensions of the groups. The examples supporting the typology are from MS contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 5 Belgium’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 6 Greece’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 7 For aspects of the second generation development see for example groups the UK’s, Germany’s, Italy’s and the Czech Republic’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 8 For combinations of aspects of non-EU-based and EU-based groups see for example Greece’s, Germany’s, Portugal’s and Hungary’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 9 The international dimension can be used in the form of language, family ties, values, etc.
- 10 “Colombian organisations tend to be vertically integrated, but require collaborators in each country in order to overcome institutional or bureaucratic problems and to extend their networks in countries where they have no pre-existing links. [...] When the Colombians began a marketing drive in Western Europe [...] they reinforced links with Italian Mafia groups who were better established throughout Europe and who could guarantee distribution. Bridgeheads were consolidated in Spain, the only EU country where Colombians could pass virtually unnoticed.” Jamieson A., “Cooperation Between Organized Crime Groups Around The World” in “Jahrbuch für Internationale Sicherheitspolitik 1999”, December 1999, www.bmlv.gv.at.
- 11 Cf. the UK’s and Spain’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 12 The UK’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 13 Germany’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 14 Cf. the UK’s, Germany’s and Italy’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 15 Germany’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 16 Greece’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 17 Germany’s contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 18 Portugal’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 19 Cf. Finland’s, Sweden’s, Denmark’s and AWF Monitor’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA
- 20 Cf. Groups Camorra, ‘Ndrangheta and Apulian OC in Italy’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 21 Oriented clusters are reported to make use of violence, infiltration or corruption within the

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EU. All of these features can be interrelated and underpinned by the development of an “intimidating reputation” factor. Organised crime can achieve influence without the direct use of violence, limiting itself to intimidation based on explicit or implicit threat of harm. In theory, such a situation might even facilitate the acceptance of corruptive proposals when it is feared that a refusal could lead to violence. Similarly, there can be attempts against law enforcement and judicial officers, with the aim of avoiding or hindering an investigation, prosecution or conviction. In addition, law cannot be effectively upheld without support of the surrounding community. Fear and mistrust generated by the ‘intimidating reputation factor’ may undermine this support. 2007 OCTA.

- 22 Cf. Groups Cosa Nostra, Camorra, ‘Ndrangheta and Apulian OC in Italy’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA, and Germany’s, Finland’s, Lithuania’s, and Portugal’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 23 Italy’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 24 Intelligence suggests that Hells Angels has a total of 264 chapters worldwide. AWF Monitor’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 25 Cf. Finland’s and Norway’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 26 The UK’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 27 The UK’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 28 Germany’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 29 Germany’s and Portugal’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 30 Sweden’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 31 This hypothesis is based on the premises that both the group active in Portugal and the network active in Germany are involved in trafficking heroin from Turkey to, among others, Spain; they both have some of their leaders in Spain; and they employ members of Roma ethnicity in Spain. Portugal’s and Germany’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 32 AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 33 Belgium’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 34 Portugal’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 35 AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 36 BBC Monitoring Americas; Mexican, Colombian drug cartels look for new markets in Europe, 16 October 2007.
- 37 France’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA, AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 38 AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 39 Links between St. Kitts and the UK, Jamaica and the UK, Martinique and France, Aruba and The Netherlands, Dominican Republic and Spain etc.
- 40 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
- 41 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report; Portugal’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Belgium’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA; France’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA; The Netherlands’ contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 42 AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 43 Ghana and Nigeria with the UK, Ivory Coast with France, Cape Verde with Portugal.
- 44 Germany’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 45 Interpol’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 46 AWF Cola’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 47 AWF Mustard’s contribution to the 2008 OCTA, the Netherlands’ contribution to the 2008

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OCTA.

- 48 AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 49 Germany's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 50 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA;
Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; AWF Mustard contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 51 AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 52 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 53 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 54 AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 55 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 56 See chapter on the general assessment of OC groups.
- 57 Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 58 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA and Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 59 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; AWF
Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 60 France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 61 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA;
Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's
contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 62 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008
OCTA.
- 63 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 64 Large scale production capacities in Indonesia and Australia using precursors from China
while production capacities in Eastern Europe profit from the Russian nearness. Interview
with Dutch LO, 15 October 2007.
- 65 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 66 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA, AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008
OCTA.
- 67 CEPOL Course "Drug Strategy of the EU", Czech Republic, 17-20 September 2007.
- 68 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 69 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA
- 70 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 71 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 72 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 73 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA
- 74 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Interview with UK Liaison Officers.
- 75 Project Synergy, The production and Trafficking of Synthetic Drugs, related Precursors and
Equipment – A European Union Perspective, the Hague, July 2007.
- 76 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; The Netherlands contribution to the 2008 OCTA;
UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
- 77 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
- 78 France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; The
Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 79 In 2006, 5,201 cannabis nurseries were dismantled; The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008
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- 80 Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, the major biologically active compound in cannabis.
- 81 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
- 82 The Czech Republic's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 83 The Netherlands contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 84 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
- 85 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report; AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 86 Frontex' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 87 Lithuania's, Romania's, Austria's, Italy's, Poland's, Malta's, Slovakia's, Hungary's, Finland's, Sweden's, The Netherlands', Belgium's, Spain's and France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, The UK's, Ireland's and Malta's, Denmark's, contribution to the 2007 OCTA, the Czech Republic's, Germany's, Greece's, Estonia's and Latvia's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 88 Lithuania's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Latvia's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 89 Italy's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Romania's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 90 Lithuania's contribution to the 2007 OCTA. According to the CIS webpage (www.cis.minsk.by), the CIS comprises Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan discontinued permanent membership as of 26 August 2005 and is now an associate member.
- 91 Poland's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 92 Romania's, Denmark's, Italy's, France's, The Czech Republic's, Greece's, Spain's, Germany's, The Netherlands, Sweden's, and the UK's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Norway's and Austria's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Ireland's and Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 93 Romania's, Belgium's and Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Austria's and the UK's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 94 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 95 Italy's, France's and Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Greece's and Belgium's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, The Netherlands', the UK's contribution and Lithuania's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 96 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Lithuania's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 97 Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 98 Estonia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 99 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Lithuania's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 100 Patrick A. Taran, Gloria Moreno-Fontes Chammartin (International Labour Office), "Getting at the Roots: Stopping Exploitation of Migrant Workers by Organised Crime", Geneva 2002, Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Belgium's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 101 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 102 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, The UK's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Denmark's, Latvia's and Germany's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 103 This facilitating factor is also important with reference to illegal immigration flows transiting

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through the Western Balkans. SC3 contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

- 104 Norway's, Germany's The UK's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Belgium's, Italy's, France's, The Netherlands', Denmark's, Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Ireland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 105 SC3 contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 106 Gao Yun, International Labour Office, "Chinese migrants and forced labour in Europe", Geneva, 2004.
- 107 Cf. Gao Yun, International Labour Office, "Chinese migrants and forced labour in Europe", Geneva, 2004.
- 108 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, France's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 109 The UK's, Romania's, France's and Norway's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Finland's and Denmark's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Sweden's and Switzerland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA .
- 110 Czech Republic's and Slovakia's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Poland's and Eurojust's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, the UK's and Sweden's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 111 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 112 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 113 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 114 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 115 SC3's and Sweden's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 116 Sweden's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 117 Italy's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
Catalin Ghinararu, Mariska N.J. van der Linden, International Labour Office, "Trafficking of migrants workers from Romania: Issues of labour and sexual exploitation", Geneva 2004
- 118 Italy's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 119 An example of investment fraud is the so-called boiler room scam. The victim receives a call from a person purporting to represent a legitimate company. Once a relationship with the victim is established, a broker will contact the victim and claim to share insider information by telling the victim that the stock of the company is going to go through the roof in the very near future. The victim is lured in and forwards money to the brokers for the purchase of company stocks - but never receives anything for the money. These schemes often successfully exploit the existence of borders between different jurisdictions; for example, based on given information the victims think they are dealing with a company in Sweden but the calls are redirected to the boiler room in Spain. Since the victims are not located in Spain, the prosecution of the criminals in Spain becomes very complicated. Cf. Eurojust's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, and Aglionby J., "It's full steam ahead for 'boiler room' con artists", The Guardian, 26 July 2003. Article extracted from www.crimes-of-persuasion.com in November 2007.
- 120 Cf. OLAF's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 121 For example, the following countries have been listed as relevant by some MS in VAT and tax fraud: Germany, the UK, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, UAE/Dubai, China, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. Denmark's and Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA. A group in the UK uses the UK, UAE, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Turkey, China, Canada and Hong Kong to perpetrate MTIC fraud. The UK's contribution to

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the 2008 OCTA.

- 122 This seems to apply especially to the awarding of public contracts and fraud against EU funds in some MS. For example the Czech Republic and Italy reported the involvement of small-scale crime and individuals either alone or in collaboration with others in these types of fraud. Italy's and the Czech Republic's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 123 Cf. Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 124 Cf. Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 125 OLAF's contribution to the 2008 OCTA. See also for example the Czech Republic's, Italy's, Lithuania's, Poland's, Slovakia's and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 126 Luxembourg's and Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 127 For example a Finnish export company sells products to a company registered in a tax haven at a current price, and correct documents are presented to the Finnish Customs. Prior to entering Russia the export documents are changed and a false bill is presented to the Russian Customs mentioning a price equal to 15-35 per cent of the original value. In this way most part of the import duties due to the Russian government will be avoided. Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 128 "Rikollisuuskatsaus 2007", Crime Overview 2007, Finnish National Bureau of Investigation, KRP/RTP/5185/213/07.
- 129 Cf. 2006 OCTA and Analysis Project "Planet II", AWF Terminal, October 2007.
- 130 Cf. 2006 OCTA, Analysis Project "Planet II", AWF Terminal, October 2007, and an OCTA Interview with representatives of the payment card industry, May 2007.
- 131 For example, an EU-based criminal might arrange to steal data relevant to US citizens via a technology-savvy criminal based in Russia. He could then place postal redirects, divert telephone numbers and add secondary identities to an account, and arrange for debit or credit cards to be dispatched to UK mail boxes for a UK-based runner to pick them up and obtain cash or high value goods anywhere in the world. Green, A., "The Industrialisation of Identity Fraud" in "Victims of Fraud Dossier", Part II, Experian, <http://press.experian.com/documents/showdoc.cfm?doc=2586>, 12 April 2007.
- 132 France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 133 Cf. Italy's and OLAF's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 OLAF's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 136 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 137 Cf. OLAF's contribution to the 2007 OCTA and Fijnaut C., "The administrative approach to organised crime in Amsterdam: background and developments" in Fijnaut C. (ed.), "The administrative approach to (organised) crime in Amsterdam", City of Amsterdam, July 2002.
- 138 Cf. OLAF's contribution to 2007 OCTA.
- 139 Van der Wielen L., "The screening and auditing approach in combating crime" in Fijnaut C. (ed.), "The administrative approach to (organised) crime in Amsterdam", City of Amsterdam, July 2002.
- 140 The number '419' refers to the article of the Nigerian criminal code covering this type of advance fee fraud.
- 141 Cf. Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 142 Cf. Dixon R., "Nigerian Cyber Scammers", Los Angeles Times, www.latimes.com, 20 November 2005.
- 143 For example, in the Netherlands this "zero-tolerance" has worked efficiently and even acted

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as a deterrent; as soon as a bank account to which victims have been asked to send money is detected, it is closed, and the identities and addresses used by the recipients are blocked. Additionally, Chambers of Commerce, telephone companies, Internet providers and banks work closely with the investigative agencies. The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

- 144 Cf. Dixon R., "Nigerian Cyber Scammers", Los Angeles Times, www.latimes.com, 20 November 2005.
- 145 Czech Republic, Finland, Lithuania and Poland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 146 AWF Soya and Ireland's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 147 AWF Soya's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 148 AWF Soya, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Romania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 149 AWF Soya, France, Hungary and Lithuania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 150 AWF Soya, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania and the UK's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 151 AWF Soya, Italy and Lithuania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 152 France and Spain's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 153 AWF Soya, Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Portugal's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 154 AWF Soya, Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Eurojust and Portugal's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 155 France, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and the UK's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 156 France, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and the UK's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 157 European Commission, Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), September 2007.
- 158 European Commission, Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), September 2007.
- 159 Finland, France, Italy, Poland and Romania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 160 In Austria, for instance, these offences are dealt with under private law, meaning that legal action needs to be taken by a private plaintiff. Police and prosecution take action only upon demand of the victim. In China, main source of counterfeits on a global level, judicial action can start for counterfeiting only if the original patent number is illegally written or mentioned on the packaging or documents. Moreover, this offence only exists when the overall turnover is higher than CNY 200,000 (EUR 20,000). Austria and France's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 161 Eurojust and France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 162 France and Lithuania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 163 This figure does not, however, include counterfeit and pirated products that are produced and consumed domestically, nor does it include the significant volume of pirated digital products that are being distributed via the Internet. If these items were added, the total magnitude of counterfeiting and piracy worldwide could well be several hundred billion dollars more. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *The Economic Impact of Counterfeiting and Piracy - Executive Summary*, Paris, 2007.
- 164 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghan Opium Winter Rapid Assessment 2007*, Vienna, February 2007.
- 165 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 166 The Czech Republic's, Greece's, Italy's, The Netherlands' and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 167 Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, and Spain's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 168 A perfect example of multi-crime along a two-ways route is given in Germany's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 169 Finland's, Ireland's, Italy's, Romania's, Slovenia's, Sweden's, the UK's and Switzerland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 170 Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 171 AWF Soya's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 172 European Commission, Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD), September 2007. Data on seizures in the EU in 2006.
- 173 Ireland's, Finland's, Germany's, Latvia's, Lithuania's, The Netherlands', Portugal's, , Slovenia's, Sweden's and Norway's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 174 Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 175 Germany's and The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 176 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 177 2007 OCTA.
- 178 Belgium, The Netherlands, AWF Mustard's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 179 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 180 AWF Twins' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 181 AWF Twins' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 182 AWF Twins' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 183 AWF Twins' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 184 AWF Twins' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 185 Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 186 The Czech Republic's, Poland's, Slovakia's and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 187 The FATF defines a money or value transfer system as a 'financial service that accepts cash, cheques other monetary instruments or other stores of value in one location and pays a corresponding sum in cash or other form to a beneficiary in another location by means of a communication, message, transfer or through a clearing network to which the money/value transfer system belongs.'
- 188 Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, the UK, Eurojust, Croatia, Liechtenstein and Switzerland's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 189 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 190 FATF, *'MONEY LAUNDERING & TERRORIST FINANCING TYPOLOGIES 2004-2005'*, Paris, 10 June 2005.
- 191 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 192 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA ; European Union, European Commission, Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, Energy & transport in Figures 2006, part3: Transport:
- Highest amount of passenger traffic at major EU airports in London (Heathrow), Paris (Charles-De-Gaulle), Frankfurt (Main) and Amsterdam (Schiphol)
 - Highest amount of freight traffic at major EU airports in Frankfurt (Main), Amsterdam (Schiphol), London (Heathrow), Paris (Charles-De-Gaulle), Brussels (Brussels), Köln (Bonn) and Luxembourg
 - Main EU Passenger ports: Dover and Calais
 - Highest amount of freight traffic at major EU Seaports: Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg

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- 193 ▪ Main ports for container traffic: Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp
Interview with Dutch Liaison Officer, 15 October 2007.
 - 194 Since 2004, passengers, baggage and air cargo from The Netherlands Antilles, Aruba,
Surinam, Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador have been subject to 100 % inspections at Schiphol
airport.
 - 195 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 196 4th periodical Risk Analysis on EU Member States External EU Borders, Helsinki, November
2004.
 - 197 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; AWF Mustard contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 198 AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 199 See chapter on the general assessment of OC groups.
 - 200 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 201 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 202 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 203 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 204 See chapter on the South West Region.
 - 205 Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 206 United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007 World Drug Report.
 - 207 AWF Mare Nostrum's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 208 Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 209 AWF Mare Nostrum's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 210 SOCA contribution to the 2007 OCTA; the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Interview
with UK Liaison Bureau, 12 October 2007.
 - 211 In recent years, about 50 per cent of all Nigerian nationals claiming asylum in Europe did so
in Ireland.
 - 212 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 213 Ireland's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
 - 214 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 215 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA; Irelands contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
 - 216 Irelands contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
 - 217 The UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 218 There is, however, not enough information on the structural nature of the Polish groups and
whether these can be regarded as oriented clusters. Including them in oriented clusters is a
hypothesis that needs to be confirmed or refuted with additional data.
 - 219 Cf. Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, and OCTA 2007. Lithuanian OC groups are
becoming noticeable for example in The Netherlands, Spain, the UK and Ireland.
 - 220 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA. See also the Baltic Sea Task Force's contribution
to the 2007 OCTA (Sweden and Finland).
 - 221 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 222 Cf. Denmark's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 223 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 224 See the chapter on Fraud.
 - 225 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
 - 226 Latvia's, Lithuania's and Poland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 227 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 228 Finland's contribution the 2008 OCTA.
- 229 Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 230 Frontex's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 231 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 232 Estonia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 233 Lithuania's and Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 234 Denmark's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 235 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 236 Lithuania's and Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 237 Bovenkerk, F. *'Organised crime in the former Yugoslavia'*, In Siegel, D., H. van de Bunt, and D. Zaitch (eds) *Global Organized Crime: Trends and Developments*. Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2003; 'Southeast European Legal Development Initiative (SELDI), *'Anti-Corruption in Southeast Europe: First Steps and Policies'*, Sofia, Centre for the Study of Democracy, 2002; PPP interview with SECI Center.
- 238 Denmark's, Greece's, Hungary's, Italy's, Romania's, Switzerland's, AWF Copper's and AWF Mare Nostrum's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 239 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK; Norway, Switzerland; Interpol, FRONTEX; AWFs Cola, Copper, Mustard, Smoke and Synergy; Europol's 'Crime against Persons' and 'Financial and Property Crime' Units' contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 240 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK, Norway and Switzerland contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 241 Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Spain, the UK, Norway, Switzerland and Europol's 'Crime against Persons' Unit's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 242 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 243 Romania and Italy's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 244 Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the UK, Norway, Interpol, AWFs Phoenix and Terminal and Europol's 'Crime against Persons' Unit's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 245 Italy's, Romania's, Sweden's, Norway's, Interpol's and AWF Phoenix's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 246 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 247 Romania, AWF Mustard's and Europol's 'Crime against Persons' Unit's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 248 Sweden, Norway, Interpol and Europol's AWF Phoenix's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 249 Belgium, Bulgaria and Sweden's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 250 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 251 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia, Interpol, FRONTEX, Europol's AWFs Soya, Copper, Monitor, Mustard and Synergy and Europol's 'Crime against Persons' Unit's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 252 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 253 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 254 Italy and Romania's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 255 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 256 Bulgaria and Croatia's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 257 Romania can be the destination country for ethnic Romanian living in Moldova and Ukraine, while Turks can illegally join the vast and powerful Turkish community in Bulgaria.
- 258 Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor. The constitutive declaration of CPLP is dated July 17, 1996.
- Portugal's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 259 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 260 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 261 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 262 Spain's contributions to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 263 Europol AWF EEOC. Within this AWF, "East European organised crime" includes, besides Russian organised crime, Estonian, Georgian, Moldovan, Lithuanian and other groups.
- 264 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA. Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 265 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 266 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 267 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 268 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 269 Romania's and Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 270 France's and Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 271 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, France's and Portugal's contributions to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 272 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 273 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 274 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Portugal's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 275 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 276 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 277 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 278 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 279 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's and France's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA. Cf. AWF Cola's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 280 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 281 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 282 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 283 France's and Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 284 Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 285 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 286 Portugal's and Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.

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- 287 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 288 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 289 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 290 Portugal's and Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 291 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 292 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 293 France's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 294 France's and Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Belgium's and Denmark's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 295 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 296 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 297 Portugal's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 298 Spain's, France's and Belgium's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA, Ireland's and Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 299 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 300 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 301 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 302 Spain's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
- 303 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 304 France's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 305 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 306 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 307 The majority of the 'economic migrants' present in the EU do not originate from low-income countries, because poor people lack the connections and resources to engage easily in intercontinental migration (Source: Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with third countries", COM(2002) 703 final). From International Organisation for Migration, World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of international migration, 2005: "By most recent ILO calculations, some 7,1 million migrants are economically active in other African countries."
- 308 France's and Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 309 France's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 310 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA, France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 311 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 312 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 313 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 314 Portugal's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 315 The Netherlands' and Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 316 Roissy airport is often used between Asia and Africa. France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 317 Italy's and Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 318 Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 319 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 320 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 321 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 322 The UK's, Austria's, The Netherlands', Bulgaria's and Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 323 Germany's and The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Cf. Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 324 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 325 The Netherlands', Germany's and Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's and France's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 326 The Netherlands', Belgium's, Austria's, Bulgaria's, the Czech Republic's, Estonia's, France's, Finland's, Germany's, Greece's, Hungary's, Ireland's, Italy's, Latvia's, Lithuania's, Poland's, Romania's, Slovakia's, Spain's, Sweden's and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Norway's and Denmark's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 327 The Netherlands' and Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 328 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 329 The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 330 U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 331 Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 332 The UK's and Ireland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 333 The Netherlands' and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 334 Germany's, Luxembourg's, the UK's, Ireland's, France's, The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA. Cf. France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 335 The Netherlands', Sweden's and Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA, Denmark's and Norway's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 336 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 337 Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 338 Latvia's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
- 339 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 340 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 341 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 342 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 343 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 344 Lithuania's and Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 345 Ireland's, Spain's, Lithuania's and Denmark's contributions to the 2008 OCTA.
- 346 AWF Synergy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 347 Via Latvia and Belarus as well as using the seaport of Klaipeda. Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 348 Lithuania's, Latvia's, Estonia's, Sweden's, Finland's and Germany's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 349 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 350 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 351 Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
- 352 Latvia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 353 Estonia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
354 Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
355 Estonia's, Lithuania's and Finland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
356 Interpol's and Lithuania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
357 France's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
358 France's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
359 France's and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
360 France's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
361 France's contribution to the 2007 and 2008 OCTA.
362 The UK's, Spain's, Austria's, Germany's, Romania's, Belgium's and Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
363 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
364 Spain's and The Netherlands' contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
365 France's, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation's and the UK's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
366 Interpol's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
367 Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
368 2007 OCTA.
369 SC3's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
370 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
371 AWF Mustard's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
372 Italy's, Austria's and Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
373 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
374 2007 OCTA.
375 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
376 Portugal's and Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
377 France's, Italy's, Germany's and Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
378 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
379 Austria's and Greece's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
380 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
381 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
382 Germany's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
383 Luxembourg's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
384 Liechtenstein's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
385 Liechtenstein's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
386 Switzerland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
387 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
388 U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
389 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
390 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
391 U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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- 392 Spain's contribution to the 2007 OCTA.
393 France's, Spain's and Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
394 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
395 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
396 Greece's contribution to the 2008 OCTA
397 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
398 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
399 Italy's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
400 The Czech Republic's, Slovakia's and Switzerland's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
401 Italy's, Austria's and Slovenia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
402 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
403 Bulgaria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
404 Bulgaria's, Romania's and Austria's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
405 Belgium's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
406 Slovakia's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
407 Romania's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
408 Bulgaria's and Spain's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.
409 Czech Republic's contribution to the 2008 OCTA.

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