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*Молокова А.,*

здобувач ступеня вищої освіти  
бакалавра Національної академії  
внутрішніх справ

*Консультант з мови: Гіпська Т.*

## **EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE IN COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME**

The European Union has been actively working to combat organized crime through a combination of legal frameworks, law enforcement cooperation, and various initiatives. Some key aspects of the European experience in combating organized crime include:

1. Legal Frameworks: The EU has established comprehensive legal frameworks to address organized crime. The European Arrest Warrant allows for the swift extradition of criminals between EU member states. The Framework Decision on Combating Organized Crime defines offenses and penalties related to organized crime activities.

2. Europol: Europol, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, plays a crucial role in coordinating efforts against organized crime. It facilitates information sharing and intelligence analysis among member states, assisting in the investigation and dismantling of criminal networks.

3. Eurojust: Eurojust is the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation. It supports the coordination of investigations and prosecutions across borders, particularly in cases involving organized crime. Eurojust helps ensure that criminals are brought to justice, even when their activities span multiple countries.

4. Joint Investigation Teams (JITs): EU member states often form JITs to tackle specific organized crime cases. These teams consist of investigators, prosecutors, and other experts from different countries, working together to gather evidence and prosecute criminals.

5. Financial Investigations: The EU has implemented measures to combat money laundering and disrupt the financial activities of organized crime groups. Regulations and directives have been put in place to enhance transparency in financial transactions and ensure that illicit funds are identified and seized.

6. Prevention and Public Awareness: The EU also focuses on prevention by supporting initiatives aimed at reducing the conditions that foster organized crime. Additionally, public awareness campaigns inform citizens about the risks associated with organized crime and encourage reporting of suspicious activities.

7. International Cooperation: The EU collaborates with international organizations, such as the United Nations and INTERPOL, to combat transnational organized crime effectively. These partnerships enable a global approach to addressing criminal networks.

8. Legislation against Specific Crimes: The EU has enacted legislation targeting specific types of organized crime, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and terrorism. These measures provide a legal basis for addressing these threats at the European level.

9. Capacity Building: The EU provides support and funding to member states to enhance their capacity to combat organized crime. This includes training for law enforcement agencies and the development of specialized units.

The European experience in combating organized crime is characterized by strong cooperation and coordination among member states and EU agencies. It emphasizes a multi-faceted approach that combines legal measures, law enforcement efforts, and preventative actions to address the various facets of organized crime effectively.

To summarize the views expressed by Western criminologists, in general, two main approaches are used to counter organized crime: repressive and preventive (preventive) or traditional and unconventional. The traditional (repressive) approach is, first and foremost, related to the proper functioning of the criminal justice system. It covers: 1) welldeveloped criminal legislation, especially on the laundering of dirty money and the confiscation of proceeds; 2) procedural law, first and foremost, with regard to cooperation in

the field of legal assistance (e.g. cooperation within Eurojust and Europol); 3) the means and resources to adequately investigate this category of cases specialized central agencies for combating dangerous organized groups.

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*Мунтян Б.,*

здобувач ступеня вищої освіти  
бакалавра Національної академії  
внутрішніх справ

*Консультант з мови: Гіпська Т.*

### **PUNISHMENT AND COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME IN DIFFERENT FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

Organized crime is a continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit from illicit activities that are often in great public demand. Its continuing existence is maintained through corruption of public officials and the use of intimidation, threats or force to protect its operations.

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Under the Convention (Article 2a), an "Organized Criminal Group" is defined using four criteria:

1. A structured group of three or more persons;
2. The group exists for a period of time;
3. It acts in concert with the aim of committing at least one serious crime;