

reform its police sector, strengthening educational work will be essential for building public trust and ensuring the delivery of high-quality police services.

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GLOBALIZATION OF ORGANIZED CRIME: CHALLENGES AND MEASURES OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Market globalization and the subsequent abolishing borders, together with the advantages offered by technological innovations, have created opportunities for new profits for existing and emerging criminal groups which have adapted themselves to the new needs of the market. The demand for illegal goods and services has changed and in turn resulted in an increase in the associated crimes such as trafficking in migrants (and their exploitation in local criminal circuits for prostitution, black market, theft, drug pushing, etc.), environmental offenses, drug smuggling, money laundering activities, and trafficking in stolen vehicles. At the same time,

criminal groups have learned to exploit the loopholes and legislative discrepancies present in some geographical areas and they have spread into sectors where the risk of being arrested and heavily sentenced is relatively low, especially compared to the attractive economic return. A typical example of this trend is fraud in general and specifically fraud against the financial interests of the European Union.

Therefore, attention is concentrated within each geographical area on those states in which organized crime groups present major concern. As far as single groups are concerned, we have tried to illustrate their characteristics and structuring and the way in which they spread on national and transnational levels, penetrating new markets and exploiting the loopholes existing in the legal and economic systems of many countries.

The growing concern regarding the development of organised crime, has been translated in an increasing number international initiatives dealing with this issue. These have influenced those enacted at the domestic level.

On the criminals' side their transnational development is mainly due to:

- their wish to set a distance between the location in which the illicit activity is conducted and the place from which they direct their operations, making it more difficult for law enforcement agencies to reach the core of the organisation;

- their wish to diversify their activities among several countries in order to maximise opportunities and minimise the “law enforcement risk”. In particular, they develop tactical alliances with local criminal groups, taking advantage of their expertise and local range of action, and they exploit the internationalisation of financial systems to conduct money laundering operations, thereby concealing the origin of illicit profits;

- their wish to respond to the international development of police and judicial cooperation.

On the other side, the role of international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, is to overcome the problems that arise among countries because of legislative discrepancies and inefficient cooperation (in information-sharing, in joint investigations, in the provision of assistance in legal procedures - such as testimony-taking, locating

persons and freezing forfeitable assets - and in extraditing criminals). Their aim is to ensure that rapid national action should not be hampered by the laborious mechanism of supra-national policies.

There are the major international organisations against organised crime, for example: United Nations, Council of Europe, G7/P8, European Union, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organisation of American States and other initiatives taken at the international level, from the World Ministerial Conference on Organised Transnational Crime held at Naples, Italy, in November 1994 onwards.

Since in each country the structures, techniques, methods and participants used in combating organised crime are in some cases radically different, the key element in regulating their interaction at the national and international level is co-operation among law enforcement agencies in investigating, apprehending, and prosecuting international criminals. It is important to establish lines of cooperation and communication and shared understanding of common goals throughout the world. Effective help in tracing organised criminal groups is provided by investigative cooperation between law enforcement agencies and special units, since this permits exchange of information so essential to neutralise the activities and movements of criminal groups.

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