

with the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus, and with the heart of Western Europe via the Danube, naturally make it very attractive for illegal shipments.

Following this, Romanian criminals might be benefiting mainly from their favourable geographic position, contributing to turn Romania into a point for illegal flows from Eastern Europe and Asia.

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 represents a 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.

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. A significant use of the territories of Ukraine and Russia to direct hero-

in towards the EU is reported, pointing to an eastward movement of the Balkan route. In this context, Romania and Ukraine are expected to gain further importance as transit and storage countries.

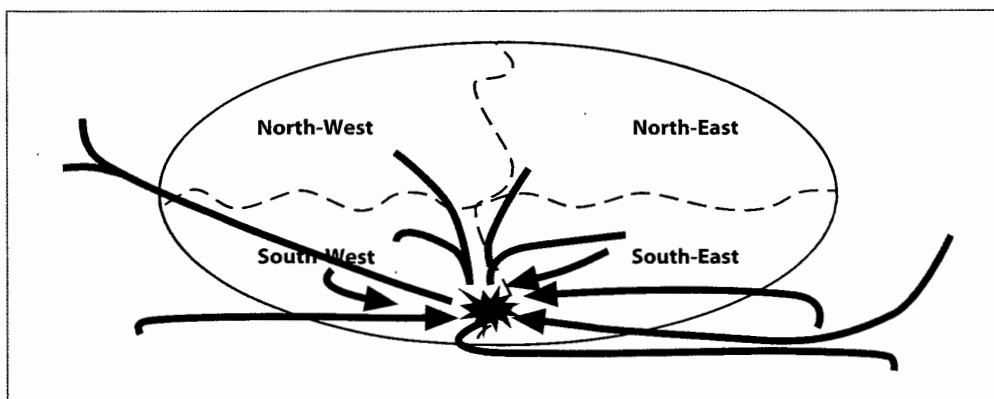
Bulgarian OC groups appear to be the most Middle East oriented. This could be due, at least in part, to the geographic position and the significant links with Turkey.

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.

Certain OC groups based in Italy have the capability of sourcing cocaine and heroin directly from the areas of production or transit.

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 geographically at the core of other criminal hubs – and its eastern part. Switzerland, The United States, Canada and Australia are also reached by the above mentioned links. 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 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.

Italy is also a transit point for smuggled tobacco meant for other Member States.

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

#### 4.5.1. The interaction between the criminal hubs

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.

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.

PAGINA BIANCA



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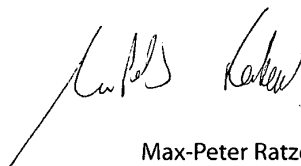
## PREMESSA

È con grande piacere che vi presento la Strategia per l'Europol e documenti connessi.

Con il lancio della strategia per l'Europol nell'ottobre 2007 l'ultimo pezzo del puzzle è a posto e l'Europol può avanzare verso il futuro.

Adesso sappiamo perché siamo qui (la nostra missione), sappiamo dove stiamo andando (la nostra visione) e sappiamo quali certezze guideranno le nostre azioni (i nostri valori). La Strategia per l'Europol ci dice come faremo ad agire e, come personale dell'Europol, potremo contribuire al successo della nostra organizzazione. In allegato troverete il codice di condotta del personale dell'Europol, che è il nostro documento guida interno basato sulla Missione, sulla Visione, sui Valori e sul rafforzamento della Strategia per l'Europol.

La Strategia per l'Europol e documenti connessi costituiscono un compendio esauriente per il personale dell'Europol. Questa nuova pubblicazione dell'Europol deve essere considerata una fonte di riferimento e la base per il nostro lavoro giornaliero.



Max-Peter Ratzel

Direttore dell'Europol

PAGINA BIANCA

## **MISSIONE**

PAGINA BIANCA

## **1. MISSIONE**

“L’obiettivo dell’Europol è quello di contribuire a migliorare l’efficacia e la cooperazione delle autorità competenti degli Stati Membri, al fine di prevenire e combattere tutte le gravi forme di criminalità internazionale e il terrorismo.”

La nostra missione risponde essenzialmente alle domande: perchè ci siamo? Qual è il nostro scopo? Fa parte delle fondamenta su cui costruire un’organizzazione efficiente dove possiamo lavorare tutti insieme.

PAGINA BIANCA

## **VISIONE**

PAGINA BIANCA

## **2. VISIONE**

“L’Europol diverrà un centro di eccellenza di altissimo livello, che assiste gli Stati membri dell’UE nella lotta contro tutte le forme di criminalità internazionale grave e il terrorismo

La nostra visione descrive l’obiettivo ideale che vogliamo sia raggiunto dalla nostra organizzazione.

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