

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GLOBAL AND TRANS-REGIONAL ORGANISED CRIME AND EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS

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Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by commending Europol and the British Chamber of Commerce for organising this important event. And thank you very much for inviting me – an invitation which I accepted without hesitation.

In many countries of the world organised crime is a significant threat to everyday life, sometimes even to the stability of society and the state. We in Europe do not always perceive the threat in the same way, but it is also here, and even if it is not here yet it can come easily - and it does.

You have heard many speakers and many different perspectives before me. Let me share with you what we have been doing from the external relations side to address organised crime.

The 2003 European Security Strategy already identified organised crime as one of the key threats to European security. There is a passage from the Strategy which summarises it well:

“Europe is a prime target for organised crime. This internal threat to our security has an important external dimension: cross-border trafficking in

drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons accounts for a large part of the activities of criminal gangs.

Such criminal activities are often associated with weak or failing states. Revenues from drugs have fuelled the weakening of state structures in several drug-producing countries. Revenues from trade in gemstones, timber and small arms, fuel conflict in other parts of the world. All these activities undermine both the rule of law and social order itself. In extreme cases, organised crime can come to dominate the state.”

All this is still valid – unfortunately.

Global proceeds of transnational organised crime were estimated to amount to 650 bn EUR in 2009 or 1.5% of global GDP (source: UNODC) - more than six times the amount of official development assistance for that year. Organised crime thus has deep pockets. Together with technological progress and globalisation this gives criminals a comparative advantage over law enforcement agencies that are constrained by limited budgets, national rules and bureaucracies. In my view, the only way to restore a level playing field is international cooperation, use of modern law enforcement techniques and appropriate budgets – yes, this costs money and it needs to be well-spent.

The EU has been investing significant amounts of money and effort to help third countries in their fight against organised crime. Under the Instrument for Stability (IfS) alone we have allocated 50 MEUR to the fight against organised crime at the trans-regional and global level for the period 2007-2013. In parallel, our geographic assistance programmes invest much higher amounts, usually in more comprehensive security-related programmes, such as security sector reform (SSR). But money alone does not do the trick. Expertise and commitment are perhaps even more important. We therefore

accompany our assistance, wherever possible, with political dialogue and expertise.

Our bilateral agreements with third countries usually include provisions on the fight against organised crime. This is followed up in our regular political dialogues, as a joint security concern, but also an important pre-condition for development.

If the political will to fight organised crime is there, it also takes expertise to implement it. We draw expertise from relevant EU agencies, such as Europol or Frontex, from Member States and also from regional or international organisations.

CSDP missions, such as EULEX Kosovo or EUPOL Afghanistan, are good examples of how expertise, political dialogue and money can be combined. Success is still not guaranteed in view of the huge problems in many countries, but these are serious attempts to crack tough nuts. However, it is not possible to send a CSDP mission to every country with organised crime problems. We have to choose our priorities carefully and use the full spectrum of our instruments.

We also tackle organised crime through cooperation and dialogue with international and regional organisations, such as the UNODC, Interpol, the OSCE or the Council of Europe. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is the guardian of the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, including its protocols on smuggling and trafficking in human beings as well as firearms. As such it has acquired remarkable expertise and experience on international cooperation against organised crime. We cooperate in many fields and have regular consultations with UNODC, both formal and informal ones.

Illicit drugs continue to pose serious risks for global stability, security and development. In December 2012, the European Union adopted a new Drugs Strategy for the period 2013-2020. It reinforces the European Union's integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to tackling the drug phenomenon. The Strategy reiterates our commitment to further strengthening dialogue and cooperation with third countries and international organisations on drug issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner. The Strategy takes on board the evolving dynamics of the illicit drugs market, including shifting drug trafficking routes, cross-border organised crime and the use of new communication technologies as a facilitator for the distribution of illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances. The recently released first European drug market report from Europol and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is well worth reading – it analyses for example growing market diversification, more complex trafficking routes, use of modern communication and trade logistics etc. Organised crime groups are increasingly taking a multi-commodity perspective and less likely to specialize in one type of drugs.

In cooperation with Interpol, UNODC, the World Customs Organisation and agencies from EU Member States we carry out a number of coordinated projects under the 'Heroin Route' and 'Cocaine Route' programmes, financed under several EU instruments. These cover activities such as container control, police training and cooperation, linking to the Interpol I24/7 information system or measures against money laundering. We are committed to invest well over 30 MEUR in these two programmes.

The EU 'Cocaine Route' programme addresses cocaine trafficking from Latin America and Caribbean, often via West Africa, to Europe. Fragile states in West Africa are a convenient zone of operations for traffickers and they have traditional links with Europe. There are also direct shipments from

Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe. In addition EU Member States have undertaken complementary initiatives. A good example is the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) which pools intelligence and naval assets of participating Member States to fight against transatlantic drug trafficking. MAOC-N is an initiative by seven EU Member States (France, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Portugal and the UK) with financial support from the EU.

The Fontanot Group, led by France, coordinates European cooperation on security issues with West Africa. Another group under German leadership (Treptower Group) has started similar coordination on the Western Balkans. We - as EEAS - are in close contact with both.

The 'Heroin Route' programme aims at tackling the continuing flow of opiates from Afghanistan to Europe. While Afghanistan is still the main opium producer, many countries are on the 'route' to consumers in Europe, or rather on the routes which have become more complex. The traditional 'Balkan Route' (via Iran and Turkey) is still used and has become a platform for all kinds of trafficking, from heroin to firearms, from synthetic drugs and cocaine to stolen goods and trafficking of human beings. Other routes have also emerged, such as the 'Northern Route' through Central Asia and the Russian Federation and increasingly the 'Southern Route' via East Africa, often involving direct container or postal shipments at some stage.

It is thus essential to work with these countries and create networks of cooperation to counter the trafficking networks. And again, EU money needs to be accompanied with political dialogue and relevant expertise.

Furthermore, we also cooperate with regional organisations, such as the Council of Europe. We support the implementation of the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention (Budapest Convention) both politically and

financially. A lot of work remains to be done in the area of cybercrime and we have just issued, together with our colleagues from the Commission, the EU Cyber Security Strategy of which cybercrime is an important part. To address this fast growing area, the European Union has recently opened the Cybercrime Center co-located with Europol. In the next two years the EU is funding several pilot projects to help European law enforcement to tackle cybercrime in third countries (under the Instrument for Stability).

Let me outline a few other examples of EU action against organised crime:

Numerous projects have been financed by the EU to tackle trafficking in human beings. Under the guidance of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, who I believe spoke this morning, we are currently reflecting on a more joined up, coordinated EU-approach in a number of priority countries and regions. This is to implement last year's "EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016" and the subsequent definition of priority countries and regions. We want to do this together with our Member States and other stakeholders, including donors, governments of third countries, civil society etc.

Illicit small arms and light weapons are an important tool and source of revenue for criminal groups. They are used to kill hundreds of thousands of people per year in the world – weapons of mass destruction indeed. Tracing the diversion of firearms from licit uses into illicit channels is essential to investigate crimes and to prevent future diversion of licit firearms. The EU therefore finances the Interpol iARMS database that registers and traces illicit firearms. We also promote this new tool in international fora, such as last year's Review Conference (on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons).

I do not have to tell my Europol and OLAF colleagues or this audience that cigarette smuggling has become almost exclusively the domain of organized crime and is linked to other forms of serious crime and terrorism.

Cigarette smuggling is increasingly a global phenomenon. When it comes to the EU's foreign policy we need to make sure that the EU's relations and negotiations with countries of "origin and transit" and the EU's actions against cigarette smuggling dovetail and reinforce each other. In this respect I would like to recall the important milestone of the 'Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products' which was adopted by the Parties to the FCTC (WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control) in Seoul in November 2012. The recitals to the Protocol are interesting reading: public health reasons are (obviously) mentioned prominently but also the fact that illicit trade undermines the economies of the Parties and adversely affects their stability and security and that illicit trade generates financial profits that are used to fund transnational criminal activity interfering with government objectives.

Let me give you a brief overview that illustrates the EU commitment to fighting smuggling and cigarette smuggling as part of its external action:

Eastern Neighbourhood

Cooperation on the fight against smuggling of cigarettes was intensified further in the framework of Eastern Partnership, inter alia through the Eastern Border Action Plan and seminars under the Eastern Partnership panels.

The Association Agreement with Ukraine includes provisions on the approximation of excise duties on tobacco with the EU. Such provisions will also be included in the Association Agreements which are currently being negotiated with Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The future Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA) with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia (currently being negotiated as integral parts of the Association Agreements) will enhance cooperation on combating illicit cross-border traffic in goods (including in tobacco products).

Southern Neighbourhood

Cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in the area of customs is covered by the Association Agreements. Future DCFTAs will enhance cooperation on combating illicit cross-border traffic in goods.

There are many other examples I could quote and much more we could do.

Conferences like this are of great value in presenting the different aspects of a very complex phenomenon. We all have our contribution to bring in this fight. We are keen to listen to your ideas, present ours and engage in open and productive discussions. This is a standing offer - it goes beyond the end of this conference.

Thank you very much for your attention.