



Bundeskriminalamt



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### **Combating Organized crime in Italy: Perspectives and problems**

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## Abstract

### *1. Situation and activities of Italian Mafia groups in Italy:*

Italy has historically suffered from a high rate of criminality, organized violence and penetration of political and economic life by organized crime groups like the Mafia, in particular the so-called “Our Thing”, in Sicily, the “Camorra” in Campania, the “Ndrangheta” in Calabria and the “Sacra Corona Unita” in Apulia Region.

- As a reaction to the success of the antimafia action the **Sicilian Mafia** and in particular the “Our Thing” is increasingly moving towards a less visible, mainly financial form of crime. It specializes in drug trafficking, political corruption, military weapons trafficking, frauds, counterfeiting, and other racketeering crimes. Investigations show that it has chosen to avoid violent actions in order to deflect the attention of the law enforcement agencies, the media and the public opinion.
- The **Camorra** – the word means “gang” - built its fortune in reconstruction after a powerful earth-quake that ravaged the Campania region in 1980. Its organization is not pyramidal as for the *Our Thing*, but horizontal. Its bosses tend to establish tactical criminal agreements among each other without an overall strategy. The Camorra specializes in cigarette smuggling and receives payoffs from other criminal groups for any cigarette traffic throughout Italy, it carries out money laundering activities, extortion, alien smuggling, robbery, blackmail, kidnapping, political corruption, and counterfeiting .
- The **‘Ndrangheta** is widening its economic influence, and the Italian Institute of Research Eurispes has estimated the proceeds of its activities to reach an amount of 44 billion a year (as stated in its report issued in 2008). The Duisburg massacre in Germany was made possible by the presence of “local” ‘Ndrangheta men. In Europe its tactic is to make itself scarcely visible, to try not to get noticed by the police authorities and to operate with a low profile in order not to be recognized as

a dangerous criminal organization. On May 30, 2008, though, U.S. President George W. Bush imposed sanctions on this Italian organized crime group in an attempt to cut off its access to the U.S. financial system and its funding. Using a U.S. anti-drug trafficking law, Bush designated the 'Ndrangheta Organization to be subject to the relevant sanctions, which prevent all U.S. companies and individuals from engaging in trade and transactions with its members.

- As for the **Sacra Corona Unita**, the law enforcement authorities became aware of its existence in the late 1980s. It allegedly started as a prison gang; as its members were released, they settled in the Apulia region and continued to develop their activities and form links with other Mafia groups. The Sacra Corona Unita specializes in cigarettes, drugs, arms, and human beings smuggling; it collects payoffs from other criminal groups for landing rights on the southeast coast of Italy. Its territory is a natural gateway for smuggling to and from post-Communist countries like Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania.

## ***2. Main fields of OC activity:***

Drug trafficking and distribution, loan-sharking, extortion, money laundering, cigarettes smuggling, robbery, blackmail, kidnapping, political corruption, counterfeiting and trafficking in human being, labour racketeering are lucrative activities for all aforesaid criminal groups.

Moreover, diversion of funds from public contracts by organized crime groups, is still a law enforcement concern, because it represents for them a major source of income for the O.C.

## ***3. Relations of Italian Mafia groups to foreign OC groups, especially to the states of South and South-western Europe and Germany.***

Starting with the early nineties, the D.I.A. has dealt with studies and carried out analysis on foreign organized crime in Italy, concentrating its attention on those criminal organizations that appeared to work like Italian mafia, with substantial financial means, controlling a vast number of illegal activities in order to make profits, using violent, or in any case coercive methods.

As a result of this activity, the D.I.A. focused on the following main foreign criminal organizations in Italy:

- *Albanian – Kosovar O.C.*;
- *Nigerian and North- African O.C.*;
- *Russian O.C.*;
- *Chinese O.C.*;
- *Colombian O.C.*;
- *Rumanian O.C.*;
- *Bulgarian O.C.*.,

Finding for each of them, these common features:

- a) *way of life*, also on the criminal side, very close to the one lead in the place of origin.
- b) Settlement in the Italian areas where the Italian organized crime doesn't normally work;
- c) no criminal agreements with Italian O.C. but for specific common interests;
- d) members living illegally in Italy, but in connection with the place of origin;
- e) drug trafficking, human beings trafficking and exploitation of prostitution as most lucrative activities .

#### ***4. Possible development of OC groups in the future.***

The increased cash flow and the consequent need to reinvest the proceeds of illegal activities as well as the growing globalization of the market facilitated the internationalization of organized crime all over the world, causing also a remarkable increase in the presence of foreign crime figures on the Italian territory.

Recent investigations and intelligence activities show that the drug trafficking carried out by 'Nrangheta in connection with Albanian – Kosovar and Colombian organized groups will be a law enforcement concern, because it continues to be its major source of criminal income.

The organized crime groups are more and more turning into transnational entities so that they can also more easily elude investigations carried out by single nations law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities against them.

In this framework the need is stressed to improve and strengthen both the cooperation at international level among law enforcement agencies and the investigation sector,

with a view to developing the preventive investigation activities and the criminal analysis work.

From this point of view the task force against the 'Ndrangheta, established in August, 2007, immediately after the Duisburg massacre, has been a very good tool which reached extraordinary results in combating this kind of organized crime. Recently, the German and Italian Authorities have implemented the competences of this task - force which is expected to have the same impact in the fight against the other kinds of organized crime groups, such as mafia, camorra and Apulian organized crime.