



Bundeskriminalamt

Economic Crime and Globalisation – New Challenges for the Police

BKA Autumn Conference from 12 to 14 November 2008

Suppression of Mafia-type Structures – Using the Example of Environmental Crime – The Italian Way

Summary of the presentation

Dr. Pietro Grasso

Anti-mafia Prosecutor in Italy

The mafia organisations existing in Italy, the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the 'Ndrangheta and the Camorra, are hierarchically or horizontally structured and operate in large territories. They are based on a range of traditional rules, including the „rule of keeping silent" (Omertà), and use violence and terror to enforce their rules. They commit criminal acts to obtain power and unlimited financial resources. They attempt to sway public opinion and to infiltrate institutions, the business sector, the financial community and the society.

Today we can conclude that based on the experience with incidents during which our martyrs shed their blood, a global strategy of combating the mafia has been developed, and this strategy has proved to be very successful especially over the last few years. In this fight, the only arms used are those of law and democracy; we respond to explosives with legal provisions without any restrictions to security. Attacks on representatives of institutions have been stopped. Not only were crimes uncovered and structures of criminal associations dismantled, but also bosses, members and murderers of mafia organisations were identified, brought to justice and convicted. Included were those who were responsible for the mafia massacres claiming the lives of Mr Falcone and Mr Borsellino in 1992. After he had been on the run for 43 years, the kingpin of the Sicilian mafia, Bernardo Provenzano, was arrested and only recently was Salvatore Lo Piccolo captured, who had attempted to take his position.

Italy distinguishes itself by having created a complex catalogue of regulations, which is very comprehensive and suited best for combating the typical structures of criminal associations and which we would be pleased to share with other countries, which have to tackle problems in connection with the fight against phenomena like organised crime at international level.

In the course of the investigation into the feud of San Luca in the 1990s and into the massacre of Duisburg on 15 August 2007, significant repressive measures were taken. Not more than a fortnight later, these led to the arrest of 43 members of both clans, who have been charged with mafia-type association, murder, illegal possession and the carrying of weapons and explosives as well as other crimes. Furthermore, assets of both mafia clans of San Luca were confiscated, including building complexes with underground bunkers, securities, life insurances etc. worth EUR 165.5 million.

In December 2007, after the integration of the German investigation within the scope of inter-agency assistance, arrest warrants were issued for members of the so-called

"Kaarster Cell" for mafia-type association. These members are believed to have been involved in the Duisburg massacre at least in terms of logistic support. Another arrest warrant was issued for Giovanni STRANGIO, one of the suspects in this case, who – like Antonino PELLE (born in 1932) from the rival gang – is still at large.

In any case, these combined measures did not only weaken the organisations fighting each other but also reduced the conflict potential in such a way that decisive talks have led to reconciliation of both sides, which will hopefully last a long time.

Today's framework of investigations has developed from the work of the Italian and German police as well as from the continuous co-operation between the National Anti-mafia Prosecutor's Office and the Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Police Office). This close and fruitful co-operation should therefore be continued.

The crime in Duisburg has illustrated like a metaphor and better than any discussion, better than any analysis, better than any consideration that the 'Ndrangheta represents a model of global crime, which one country alone cannot fight.

Being a national anti-mafia prosecutor, I keep track of the development of the phenomenon and recognise stable operational links between the Italian mafia organisations and the most significant international criminal organisations. These include the Turkish and Russian mafia, the Chinese triads, the Japanese Yakuza, the Nigerian and Albanese mafia, the mafia of the east European countries, the Colombian and Mexican cartels and the U.S. American Cosa Nostra. They are all embedded in an organic system of criminal networks, which, in turn, are interconnected through stable agreements to jointly carry out illegal business transactions and to co-ordinate the use of financial, human and material assets. Non-aggression pacts are concluded and markets and spheres of influence are divided. This applies not only to large-scale drug-trafficking and money laundering but also to other criminal opportunities offering themselves at international level.

Moreover, recent enquiries have revealed an increasing number of contacts and links between organised crime and terrorist organisations such as the Colombian FARC, the Spanish ETA, the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Connections and exchange are to be found on the joint national and international markets for narcotic drugs, weapons and explosives, as well as in the fields of trafficking in human beings, document forgery, money laundering etc.

Almost all countries share the view that organised crime, which also includes terrorism, is real and no country can consider itself immune to it. It is therefore indispensable that also countries with different and extremely diverging legal systems, traditions and cultures make efforts to find a converging point for successful and effective international co-operation.

There must be no easy escape routes or refugee countries in Europe and all over the world for mafiosi.

The internationally operating criminal organisations have divided tasks, markets, channels of commerce and spheres of influence by way of simple agreements in a world that no longer knows borders. Unless the international community organises itself in an appropriate way and is not willing to give up some privileges of national sovereignty, these organisations will eventually destroy the business sector, contaminate the political system and pose a threat to modern democracies owing to their extraordinary capability to accumulate enormous wealth as well as to infiltrate and exert influence on institutions.

Observing the universally acknowledged principles of security, we should stand united and find a response to the aggression of these ruthless rogues who are without faith and fatherland. Let us join forces to ensure that this conference becomes a moment of hope for the future of the world.