

TRENDS AND ROUTES

Anticipating shifts in organised crime structures and methods

ROUTESTRENDS

Law enforcement needs to

BE PROACTIVE AS WELL AS REACTIVE IN FIGHTING CRIME.

A reactive approach to criminal offences lies in the nature of police work – in solving cases, supporting victims and working to secure justice for them.

However, law enforcement can also be more proactive in fighting crime, particularly organised crime, by anticipating new modi operandi, shifts in criminal markets and routes as well as changes in organised crime structures.

Looking ahead enables the law enforcement community to:

- › allocate resources to best effect;
- › plan operational activities;
- › engage with policy- and lawmakers to prevent certain types of crime from emerging.

FLAGGING TRENDS

Europol offers the law enforcement community a number of products that analyse or flag trends and geographical routes in crime.

In 2015, Europol issued *Exploring Tomorrow's Organised Crime*, its first publication on the future of serious and organised crime in the EU. The report does not claim to make definitive predictions or provide a complete picture of crime in the future. Rather, it outlines possible developments and encourages law enforcement authorities to consider and explore the ways in which serious and organised crime could evolve.

OTHER ALERTS

Europol also issues shorter products on trends and routes, including:

- › early warning notifications
- › intelligence notifications

Published by Europol, these notifications offer early warnings of new organised crime threats, filling gaps in criminal intelligence and feed into the [Serious Organised Crime Threat Assessment \(SOCTA\)](#) process. Notifications (and OC-SCANs in the past) have covered cases and trends such as:

- › the kidnapping for ransom in Sinai of irregular migrants with EU-based sponsors in the Horn of Africa;
- › the impact of Mexican organised criminal groups in the organised crime situation in Europe;
- › the growing trade in counterfeit pesticides;
- › trafficking in human beings and the internet;
- › child trafficking for exploitation in forced criminal activities and forced begging;
- › theft of catalytic converters.

Other Europol bodies publish their own warning documents. The [European Migrant Smuggling Centre \(EMSC\)](#) issues intelligence notifications on new trends and early warning notifications.

Europol's European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU), which combats terrorist propaganda and related violent extremist activities on the internet, also issues intelligence notifications.

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