THE THREAT POSED BY ITALIAN ORGANISED CRIME TO THE EU

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Press Release
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Today Europol launches its Threat Assessment on Italian Organised Crime, which was carried out to evaluate the impact of mafia structures based in Italy on the European Union.

The assessment, which is the result of two years of work by intelligence analysts at Europol, underlines how the main Italian organised crime groups (principally ‘Cosa Nostra’, the ‘Camorra’ and the ‘Ndrangheta’) are operating worldwide but are careful to keep a very low profile, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to detect their presence.

“The Italian mafia-style groups are among the most threatening in Europe and in order to fight them, a pan-European approach is needed. Those of us in the law enforcement community need to step up our cooperation in tackling the most dangerous criminal groups,” says Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol.

The main criminal activities of these groups are money laundering and large-scale drug trafficking. However, they are also involved in corruption, counterfeiting and the trafficking of toxic waste. These groups’ activities are particularly dangerous because they undermine the legitimate economy.

In these times of economic crisis, the immense assets that organised crime groups have at their disposal (the Calabrian Ndrangheta are estimated to generate illicit revenues of up to 44 billion euros a year) make it easy for these groups to infiltrate the legitimate economy, injecting much-needed liquidity into struggling businesses.

No truly legitimate business can afford to compete with criminal companies that can manage to produce goods and services at a loss as part of a long-term strategy to take over markets. The criminals’ ‘expansion strategies’ mean that they are now touching parts of Italy and Europe not historically affected by organised crime, which could cause serious damage to the EU economy in the long run.

The threat assessment concludes with a series of recommendations for law enforcement authorities and policy makers. Meanwhile, Europol has set up an operational project dedicated to tackling Italian
organised crime groups. The project is fully supported by Italian law enforcement and judicial authorities, who are playing a key role thanks to their in-depth experience in the field. Many EU Member States, non-EU countries and organisations such as Eurojust are also involved in the project.

Sonia Alfano, Member of the European Parliament, says of the report:

“Europol’s assessment on Italian organised crime provides a detailed picture of the threat posed by mafia at a European level, confirming that they are not just a regional problem. This document shows how a quick response by the European Union is vital, to take adequate and specific policy measures, as suggested by Europol, to tackle this serious threat. The European Parliament will take on board the recommendations fully when drawing up the global plan against organised crime, corruption and money laundering, which we are currently working on in the CRIM Committee. As Chair of the CRIM Committee, I would like to really thank Europol and its Director for their work, which is in response to a specific request made by the European Parliament in its resolution on organised crime, approved in October 2011”.

CRIME AREAS
- Mafia-Structured Organised Crime Groups (OCG)

TARGET GROUPS
- General Public
- Law Enforcement
- Academia
- Professor
- Students
- Researcher
- Other

COUNTRIES
- Italy