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# WEAPON SMUGGLERS ARRESTED IN ITALY WITH THE SUPPORT OF EUROPOL

09 Jun 2016

[Press Release](#)

On 7 June 2016, the Italian Carabinieri, in close cooperation with Europol, arrested in Catania 2 leading members of the Mafia clan 'Ceusi', affiliated to the criminal group 'Cosa Nostra' for weapons smuggling.

The investigation, coordinated by the local District Anti-Mafia Directorate, was initiated following the seizure in June 2015 of a parcel containing firearms and ammunition. That same month, on the basis on information provided by Europol, the French Police Nationale intercepted a parcel containing three pistols and a machine gun. Both these parcels were traced back to the same individuals.

Intelligence analysis provided by Europol's Focal Point Firearms helped reveal that the suspects had purchased over 160 decommissioned firearms from Slovakia for a total value of EUR 45 000. These deactivated weapons had their barrels perforated by a pin, a step which can be easily defeated by changing the barrel.

The Italian investigators revealed that a number of these firearms had been reactivated and sent to Malta via courier services. They also identified links between the suspects and Egyptian organised crime networks involved in migrant smuggling activities. The Italian Carabinieri are therefore not excluding the possibility that these weapons could have fallen in the hands of criminal or terrorist organisations operating in the region.

Information gathered during the operation will now be analysed by Europol in order to identify potential links with other criminal or terrorist activity across Europe and beyond. This case exemplifies the importance of Europol as an intelligence provider and its capability in detecting connections between seemingly unconnected cases.

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CRIME AREAS

[Illicit firearms trafficking](#)

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[Operation](#)

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