

OC-SCAN POLICY BRIEF

The threat of Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMCGs) in South East Europe

The presence of Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMCGs) has so far been detected across the entire European continent (except in Cyprus). Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) has already expanded significantly into Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Turkey. HAMC's attention towards Eastern Europe has been a subject of reporting to Europol's Analysis Work File (AWF) Monitor since 2005. The decision to produce a threat notice specifically on OMCG activities in South East Europe was based on comprehensive environmental scanning of new and emerging organised crime threats.

This Policy Brief draws on the key findings of the OC-SCAN Threat Notice (002-2010) on the "Expansion of Hells Angles Motorcycle Club to South East Europe", as well as the expertise of staff working at Europol and within the national competent authorities across the EU, in providing the following recommendations:



Posters advertising HAMC Luxembourg events in Albania and Turkey

- OMCG activities in South East Europe gravitate around the activities of HAMC charters now operating in this region and the EU's North West criminal hub. In light of their general capacity to engage in drug trafficking on the 'Balkan Route' and prior involvement in organised crime activities in North West Europe, the members of these specific HAMC charters warrant a joint investigative approach at European level.
- Over 60 local motorcycle clubs, many of which display links to international OMCGs have been detected across South East Europe. An effort to fill the intelligence gap concerning local OMCGs would enable authorities in South East Europe to implement zero-tolerance strategies against them.
- The local authorities in South East Europe face an unfamiliar threat and HAMC is already using diverse strategies to build a capacity to exert corruptive influence in the region. This new type of threat should be addressed directly by raising local awareness of the wider range of threats associated with OMCGs.
- In evaluating the options for responding to the OMCG threat (e.g., zero-tolerance approaches, banning of chapter and prohibitive contra-OMCG legislation), authorities in South East Europe can draw on a range of existing expertise at national and European level. To facilitate such cooperation, the allocation of a Single Point of Contact within the national competent authorities in South East Europe will be an important step.
- National competent authorities across Europe are in a position to directly assist in response to this threat, for instance, by monitoring the travel movements of OMCG members to the region and informing their local counterparts. Europol's AWF Monitor supports such initiatives through its analytical capabilities.

Remark: OC-SCAN Threat Notices aim to fill intelligence gaps within the framework of the European Criminal Intelligence Model (ECIM) and feed directly into the Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) process. The significance of these threats in relation to the European criminal situation is only assessed in the OCTA.