

SEPCA THREAT ASSESSMENT PUBLIC REPORT 2019



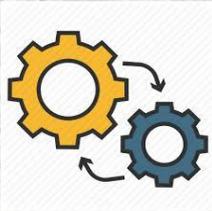
SEPCA WORKING GROUP 2019

Report provides an analysis and assessment of the organized and serious crime activities dated between 2017-2018, specific to the SEPCA region.



THE AIMS OF THE REPORT

- ✓ *to provide a strategic analysis of the serious and organized crime threats faced by SEPCA countries*
- ✓ *to address identified threats and to monitor arising or developing threats*
- ✓ *to become a management tool for the Police Directors General*
- ✓ *to provide recommendations in order to adopt a mid and long term Strategy for common activities in the field of prevention and combating criminal phenomenon*



METHODOLOGY



Top five priority crime areas of the SEPCA region

1. *property crime*
2. *illegal migration & human trafficking*
3. *illicit drug trafficking*
4. *cyber crime*
5. *organized crime groups (corruption and money laundering)*



Approach of the REPORT

1. *the global nature of the problem*
2. *the state of affairs in the environment*
3. *the local market*
4. *money flow*
5. *modi operandi*
6. *future trends*



PROPERTY CRIME

- ✓ *The main property crimes committed in the SEPCA region are burglaries of houses, business premises or vehicles*
- ✓ *ATMs, jewelry shops, cargos and vehicles represent prime targets in Western Europe by SEPCA region OCGs*
- ✓ *This region is a transit area for Middle-East intended assets, and a destination for stolen goods from Western Europe and other areas.*

MODUS OPERANDI



Apartment / residential buildings

- ✓ Individuals usually enter the apartment from windows, balconies, using keys to open the doors or enter the apartment through door breaks.
- ✓ The use of violence and weapons in committing burglaries is at low frequencies.



Business premises

- ✓ Mainly concerns to burglaries and robberies.
- ✓ The attacked facilities are mainly those dealing with a large amount of cash -- banks, post offices, exchange offices, bookies, casinos and stores with expensive watches and jewelry.



Motor vehicles

- ✓ Perpetrators use special tools and electronic devices in order to enable vehicles to forcefully open and operate.
- ✓ The cars are hidden in secret locations and the documents or the identification numbers of the chassis and the engine are forged



ATM

- ✓ Thefts are mainly committed by plucking out the cash box machine using explosive compounds.



Phone scams

- ✓ Getting popular in the last decade.
- ✓ The victims are usually elderly people or people with poor legal knowledge that are misled about the reason they must give/transfer money.



ILLEGAL MIGRATION

- ✓ **SEPCA countries are a transit area for irregular migrants that are trying to reach Western Europe from the Middle East and North Africa via the Western Balkans route**

- ✓ **The detected irregular migrants transiting the region via the Western Balkans were mainly citizens of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Syria, with smaller numbers from Iraq and Libya.**

- ✓ **The migrants mainly cross the green border by large vehicles, trucks, buses, vans and cars.**



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- ✓ **A common trend for the SEPCA countries is the decrease of using violence towards the victims.**

- ✓ **SEPCA region remains a source area for human trafficking**

MODUS OPERANDI



Lover boy

- ✓ *The main method for recruiting victims is the “lover boy”, where a relationship is created between the victim and the recruiter.*



Promise of a good job

- ✓ *Another popular recruitment method is based on the promise of a good job with high income abroad.*



TRAFFICKING DRUGS

- ✓ *The SEPCA region is still vulnerable to the production, trafficking in drugs within the European Union*
- ✓ *The region became a strategic scene in developing new Modus Operandi in the trafficking of cannabis, cocaine and heroin.*
- ✓ *The Darknet and the popular online sale of synthetic drugs becomes a serious threat in the SEPCA region.*
- ✓ *A vice-versa flow of drugs trafficking occurs from the Western Europe to the SEPCA region as well.*



Cannabis

- ✓ *Is the most consumed and popular drug with the highest market share in the SEPCA region.*
- ✓ *It is expected that cannabis trafficking will increase in view of large-scale cannabis production and smuggling.*
- ✓ *Cannabis trafficking is mostly committed by land including illegal border crossings, inaccessible terrains and sometimes by blue borders*



Cocaine

- ✓ *Cocaine trafficking at the European level is marked by OCGs' interest in introducing large amounts of cocaine from South America, using diversified routes and increasing sophisticated dissimulation methods, that make it impossible to detect.*
- ✓ *Trafficking cocaine via couriers (“swallowers” or “mules”), that hide drugs in personal baggage when crossing the border, is still very common for the region.*



Heroin

- ✓ Heroin is smuggled, with unabated intensity, via the territory of SEPCA member states via the Balkan route (Northern, Central and Southern route) and one part is smuggled through the East European Route via the Black Sea.
- ✓ Production of heroin is not present in the SEPCA member states, but the trend of smuggling heroin throughout the territory of the member states of SEPCA will continue.
- ✓ Transportation of big quantities continues to be performed by transit cargo vehicles, regularly carrying food and household goods to other European countries.



Synthetic drugs

- ✓ Synthetic drugs produced in Western Europe and heading towards the East are seized on the Balkan route.
- ✓ Synthetic drugs are increasingly becoming dominant in relation to other drugs.
- ✓ The Darknet and the online sale of synthetic drugs is a serious threat in the SEPCA region.
- ✓ Precursors for synthetic drug production are smuggled from South-Eastern Asia (China and India) to European countries and vice versa.



CYBERCRIME

- ✓ The largest vulnerabilities favoring criminals is the lack of cyber-security awareness of people operating in private and state-owned companies/institutions, and the uneven nature of cyber-security response mechanisms.
- ✓ The cybercrime is in an upward trend that allows for various and frequent forms of fraudulent acts, such as: internet scams, forgery of payment cards, as well as, using mandate fraud, invoice fraud, business email compromise.
- ✓ The modus operandi of cybercrime is usually via gaining unauthorized access to an electronic device or denying access to a legitimate user.



Online child sexual exploitation

- ✓ The evolution in the field of information technology has facilitated the production and distribution of images and videos of sexually abused children, while offering anonymity to offenders.



Payment cards frauds

- ✓ The trend of cashless payments is growing and thus the theft of data from payment cards is also increasing.

Ransomware



- ✓ Consists in executing malicious software on the victim's computer and encrypting all the information contained on the hard disk, without the user knowing the decryption password. Then the cybercriminal demands payment to decrypt the hard disk.

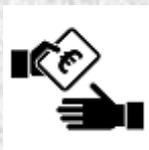
ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS (Corruption & Money laundering features)

- ✓ *Most organized crime groups in the SEPCA region are polycriminal.*

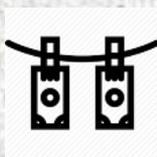


- ✓ *The work modalities of certain OCGs are becoming more complex as a result of the increasing degree of flexibility and their cooperation at regional and international level.*

- ✓ *The dominant criminal activities of OCGs in the SEPCA region are trafficking in drugs trafficking, smuggling of migrants and property crime.*



Corruption is used by criminal groups at various levels in the executive, legislative and judicial branches in order to provide confidential information on the performance of law enforcement institutions, on-going investigations and planned activities, provision of permits etc



Money laundering in the SEPCA region is generally characterized by various methods, some of which are highly complex and constantly changing, but overall have the same goal – to transfer as many illicit funds into legal flows as possible. A serious challenge for law enforcement institutions is monitoring the flow of money with the use of new technologies and payment methods with crypto-currency, prepaid cards and online payments.

ISSUED RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this assessment, the response to serious and organized crime in the region should focus on the following priority recommendations:

- ✓ *Improving the cooperation between law enforcement agencies by conducting regional joint operations in order to dismantle OCGs operating in this area.*
- ✓ *Making an effective exchange of information on the latest developments of the criminal phenomenon (new modi operandi, best practices, etc.) both informally, by creating a network of contact points between police officers, and formally through international organizations and police cooperation channels.*
- ✓ *Using the latest technology by improving partnership with the private sector.*
- ✓ *Enhancing joint border patrolling by including more countries and operations for identification and stopping migration flows to and within SEPCA region and Europe.*
- ✓ *Identifying weak points where illegal migrants are staying and preparing for the next trip and the local people that support them.*
- ✓ *Creating specific profiles of the crime areas (i.e. offenders, modus operandi, changing routes, etc.) as an outcome of the investigations (joint and individual), these being systematically shared with the SEPCA member states.*
- ✓ *Align the legislation of the SEPCA countries with the Anti-Money Laundering directive of the EU.*