



**Speaking points**  
**Ministerial Conference, Belgrade**  
**29-30 November 2011**

- We all understand and recognise that drug trafficking is a well organised criminal activity that causes significant damage to our societies and we heard yesterday from almost all speakers how it has been prioritised by their law enforcement and judicial agencies.
- There is no cross border drug trafficking without OC involvement and this region has seen a recent expansion in the activities of OC. Commissioner Malmstrom quoted Europol's OCTA 2011 which identifies the Western Balkan region as a hub for drug trafficking to and from the EU. I do not intend to repeat what she said other than to say that combating the production and supply of drugs has always been a priority for Europol. Indeed the organisation evolved from the European Drugs Unit. .
- Insofar as International Police cooperation is concerned and how Europol contributes to the fight against OC and drug trafficking? Europol's core

business is the coordination and support of MS and TP investigations into serious and organised crime.

- 35 Liaison Bureau representing the EU MS and our partner countries work with the nine Units of Europol's Operations Department to provide a 24/7 service of information exchange, intelligence development, operational analysis, strategic analysis, expertise and knowledge.
- Albania and Croatia have Liaison Officers posted to Europol, I know from experience that their physical presence in Europol's HQ enhances communication and cooperation and I endorse the Commissioner's statement that the remaining countries in the region should post LO to Europol.
- We also heard the Commission identify yesterday that the exchange of criminal information and intelligence lies at the heart of combating OC. Europol 's Information systems, the Analytical Work file regime and SIENA serves as the EU's platform for information exchange.
- Europol supports the MS and our partners in combating drug trafficking in South East Europe by providing operational analysis and intelligence development across a number of dedicated projects, currently known as Analytical Work Files; they are - AWF Heroin, AWF Cola, AWF Cannabis, AWF Synergy

and AWF Copper (dealing with OCG having ethnic links to Albania)

- These projects not only work in close cooperation with the investigators and prosecutors via the Liaison Bureaux and ELOs posted to Europol but also with their counterparts in country by providing on the spot support and assistance with the deployment of the mobile office and an analytical team
- A brief example of how our routine and daily work has an impact upon the production and supply of drugs.
- Commissioner Malmstrom told us of the reverse Balkan route in relation to the movement of the heroin pre-cursor Acetic Anhydride from the EU towards Afghanistan. AA is a common industrial chemical with a wide variety of commercial uses in the paints, plastics, polymers, cellulose (for cigarette filters) and explosives manufacturing industries. It is produced on a colossal scale primarily in the US and in the EU. It is subject to strict international and EU control because apart from its licit commercial use, it is a critical chemical used in the illicit manufacture of heroin, notably in Afghanistan. 'Critical', because without it, it is virtually impossible to produce heroin! Acetic anhydride is not produced in Afghanistan, therefore criminal groups (actually the Taleban

increasingly organise and seek to control this activity) seek to 'divert' it from licit international trade then arrange for it to be smuggled into the country.

- The Taleban now have a tight grip on the supply and distribution of acetic anhydride inside Afghanistan, not least because of the vast profits involved (it can be purchased at \$1 per litre wholesale and can be re-sold in Helmand Province, Southern Afghanistan at \$400 per litre).
- The EU is increasingly targeted by drug traffickers as a potential source of acetic anhydride and highly organised criminal groups located at strategic points between Europe and Afghanistan facilitate shipments eastwards. Europol's AWF Heroin supported several EU operations this year involving countries represented here today where more than 37 tonnes of acetic anhydride destined toward Afghanistan were seized, this quantity far outweighing rest of the world seizures for the same time period.
- This example also provides an insight into the globalisation of OC networks and how we must remain aware of emerging threats, new trends and markets. Criminal networks react quickly to new opportunities and adapt their activity to maximise the potential offered by new and emerging markets.

In order for the authorities to stay in touch when OC groups diversify there must be a timely exchange of information and intelligence between state authorities.

- Making effective use of the mechanisms in place to do this should be seen and recognised as good practice. From my perspective this is one of the key areas for Police cooperation.
- Another good practice and fundamental area for Police cooperation is multi national or cross border investigation.
- The obstacles to dismantling organised crime groups often stem from their international dimension or influence. National investigations into OC related crime which are not developed beyond the borders of the prosecuting state are unlikely to have any impact upon the liberty, lifestyle and assets of the criminals responsible when they are based in another country
- Coordinated multi national investigations have a significant impact on the activities of organised criminals across the world and help to create a hostile environment for those involved
- It is important that countries allocate sufficient and relevant national resources to international cooperation and that national priorities are adopted accordingly. In order to respond effectively to the

expansion of OC activity, coordinated law enforcement action is fundamental.

- Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) are seen as an effective investigative tool in the conduct of international criminal investigations
- It is likely that until coordinated cross border investigations which target the 'main players' become routine, there will be no reduction in the level of drug trafficking into, from and within the European Union and therefore no reduction in the threat posed to EU and other citizens.
- The opportunity to investigate, prosecute, convict and dismantle an international organised crime network does not present itself on a regular basis. Its not like using public transport, you miss your connection but its okay because there will be another one coming along soon. For all sorts of reasons, you may only get one chance, when it presents itself, take it with both hands and use every tool at your disposal to make sure your actions have a lasting consequence.

Thank you for your attention.