

The European Union's SOCTA 2017 Report

A Comparative Analysis of a Political Discourse of Reality and Reality on the Ground

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It was an experience to read the EU's attempt to politically spin the reality of EU organised crime through a discourse that again does not match reality on the ground. A discourse that is selling its kool aid of a manufactured reality that amounts to the most powerful asset globalised transnational organised crime (GTOC) has in its arsenal. The refusal to address in the public domain the power of GTOC in the EU as a result of the failure to evolve the infrastructure of the EU in order to effectively deal with the threats generated by a single market driven by a single currency and the free movement of capital and people within the boundaries of this single market. GTOC is empowered to move and act at will within this single market whilst law enforcement and the rest of the criminal justice structure are still existing within the limits of meaningless borders created by 19th century European nationalist states. This operational limitation of the EU is the primary stimulant to a rapidly evolving organised crime environment in the EU as crime groups have long learnt that in order to exploit the opportunities afforded by the single market they must now become transnational in worldview and operational scales. The EU has established a built in bias in favour of transnational crime groups and in the era of globalisation those groups that made the jump to become globalised crime groups are even more favoured by the present configuration of the EU. Italian globalised organised crime groups as a result are at the apex of the crime hierarchy of the EU and their dominance of large sections of the illicit markets of the EU along with other groups has heightened and continues to evolve. There is no single evolutionary, homogeneous development of organised crime and in the other levels of criminal activity in the EU that is independent of the rigid hierarchy of rank and privilege that structures the social order of the illicit markets of the EU. The presence, the space occupied, the resources possessed and utilised including those in the licit world by GTOC in the illicit markets of the EU ensure that any distinction between organised and unorganised crime driven by a designation of spaces controlled and not controlled by both is on the ground illusory. In fact, the hustlers and non-affiliates of organised crime are constantly on the lookout for the arrival of the collector of tribute from the hegemonic organised crime group of the area and the possible hostile takeover with mortuaries in tow. The lesson then is: do not

create distinctions and typologies of black and white when in illicit markets daily operations flow along rivers of different shades of grey and the arbitrary nature of the exercise of power in an illicit market as power is exercised by maximum leaders.

SOCTA 2017 states: “The illicit drugs market remains the largest criminal market in the EU. More OCGs are active in the production, trafficking and distribution of illicit drugs than any other phenomenon.” Organised crime in the EU and especially globalised organised crime as cocaine and heroin are imported into the EU dominate the social order of illicit markets of the EU with GTOC at its apex because of the size, scale and wealth generated by the illicit drug markets of the EU. The illicit drug markets of the EU continue to evolve leviathans of the underworld who utilise their special prowess to maximise profits and chase sustainable hegemony by seeking to dominate various illicit products and their markets. Cocaine, methamphetamines and hashish, human smuggling and small arms trafficking, fake pharmaceuticals, fake goods, illicit energy and minerals is one such combination. In every combination there are ancillary areas that flow from the component parts of the illicit product combination and in these ancillary, spin off flows the decision is taken whether to dominate these flows under the aegis of the parent organisation, farm it off to affiliates or to leave it to the illicit equivalent of a free market where taxes are collected from the operators by hegemonic GTOC. In every single space under the hegemony of organised crime this is the rule that impacts all illicit activity from pan handling to pick pockets to burglary all the way to the top tier drug dealing, gambling and prostitution. This is an illicit social order with its illicit power relations and hegemonic discourse existing in a supposedly licit social order with its licit power relations and hegemonic discourse. The two orders must then interact and work out their terms of endearment as they are organic to each other as the licit order needs power expressed in spaces where it’s excluded and the powered of the illicit order needs the services of the licit functionaries: washers, sellers of protection and impunity. The illicit drug market is the most potent market for EU organised crime but it’s an illicit market that thrives and drives the evolution of organised crime in a licit order. Can you see clearly now! All other realities depicted in SOCTA 2017 then flow from a single dominant and most profitable illicit market in the EU: the illicit

drug market. But it's the market the report expresses it grave lack of understanding of.

The report states: "The most threatening OCGs are those which are able to invest their significant profits in the legitimate economy as well as into their own criminal enterprises, ensuring their business continuity and a further expansion of their criminal activities." The oligarchy of organised crime is in business to generate wealth and there is a vast difference between holding tonnes of dirty cash and generating and possessing wealth. It's the links to the licit world that enables crime to generate, amass and wield wealth and it's these links that enable the appearance and evolution of organised crime along various evolutionary stages the present being globalised organised crime. The proceeds of crime invested in the licit economy is not the genesis of the threat posed but the partnership between players in the illicit and licit spheres resulting in organic links across the divides of the rule of law is. The discourse of corruption cannot adequately express this organic link. The report then must try to spin the reality by invoking the threat of terrorism from GTOC deliberately evading the reality that oligarchs joined at the hips across the divide of the rule of law simply will not threaten the stability of their wealth generating project. And those that threaten the project arise from marginalised groups within the illicit order and will be given up by the oligarchs of the illicit order or simply dealt with. Another case of drinking the kool aid brewed for public consumption.

The report states: "Document fraud, money laundering and the online trade in illicit goods and services are the engines of organised crime in the EU." These cannot be the engines of organised crime as they are simply instruments to facilitate an illicit enterprise and any assault on them law enforcement new instruments will fill the void. Simply another political discourse to assure the electorate that there are soft targets when assaulted will assure victory. The critical issue is the sourcing, holding, distribution and security of the illicit product whether it be cocaine, smuggled humans, illicit arms and all and sundry forms of stolen goods and property. The integrity and security of the illicit markets is a grave concern for those holding the illicit products for sale and following is the process of turning cash to wealth and the security of this process. If you don't have product what use is access to a sophisticated online sales network? If you can't secure your product from predators what use is this network? If you cannot

secure your proceeds of crime what use is the network and the laundry? The reality is simply this that the most sophisticated GTOC groups will venture into utilisation of these instruments but will ensure they are compartmentalised on a need to know basis thereby insulating the oligarchy of the enterprise from breaches of security. They cannot be engines as they are instruments utilised within an organisational structure demarcated on a cellular basis with a stream of associates attached to each cell/compartment but never exposed to a grand view of the order of the illicit enterprise. Cells will be dismantled to great fanfare and much mouthing of political discourse but the enterprise grows, expands and evolves as its power expands exponentially. The best example being the Ndrangheta of Italy the most powerful indigenous EU GTOC group. The reality is simply what is being done to combat organised crime in the EU is not effective as the scale of interdiction operations in no way matches the scale of operations and power of EU organised crime. As a result of this EU failure those of us who live in the trafficking zones to the EU are paying the price for this failure and as long as the EU maintains its schizoid structure we of the transition zone will be called upon to pay an onerous price for EU intransigence. The context of the price we pay in the trafficking zones is framed by the report as follows: "The profits generated by some of the successful OCGs and individual criminals active in the EU are enormous and rival those of multinational corporations." Grand profits generated via trafficking zones where the return to the inhabitants of these zones is summed up in gun violence. This statement in the report begs the question if there are individual criminals in the illicit drug markets of the EU whose incomes match those of multinational corporations? How can these individuals continue to successfully evade the ongoing assaults of the GTOC groups who control product supply and flow to EU drug markets and other illicit markets?

The report states: "An increasing number of criminal entrepreneurs offer Crime-as-a-Service (CaaS)." Do the clients include GTOC groups as these criminal entrepreneurs are noted for their indiscipline, propensity to flout the rules of the order such as stealing from clients, their willingness to inform on their clients to their benefit and most importantly to be fronts for law enforcement sting operations. CaaS hustlers encourage indiscipline in the illicit markets as their services appeal to those locked out of the organised crime groups and their affiliates thirsty for a big score. Indiscipline in the order of illicit markets begets

violence for it's the means to reaffirm hegemony and the hegemonic order. A talented visionary offering a CaaS service will be given the choice of independent hustling or affiliation to an organised crime group or none of the above. Again another instance where political discourse trumps the need to articulate the power relations of the illicit order. The report states: "The migrant smuggling business is now a large, profitable and sophisticated criminal market, comparable to the European drug markets." This is so because of the politics of member nations of the EU and the nonexistence of EU institutions to police the borders of the EU and migrants within the EU. The wave of asylum seekers mainly from Syria and Africa created by the politicians of the EU especially Merkel of Germany, facilitated by the politics of the moment and the non-existing EU institutions to police the wave placed a windfall in the hands of criminals selling smuggling services to those desirous of moving within the EU illicitly. Globalised crime groups experienced in people smuggling exerted their resources and experience in the illicit smuggling markets and the process of exerting hegemony over these markets commenced where today they dominate key smuggling routes to and within the EU. An illicit market created by and maintained by the politics of the member states of the EU and an embrace of 21st century mainstream neo Nazi political parties will not dismantle these markets only intensify the cost of smuggling services to those paying for such services.

Glimpses of the supply of cocaine to EU illicit drug markets illustrate the gravity of the threat posed and the existing failure of the response.

This is a news report of an interdiction in Suriname on cocaine piggy backing containerised cargo to Europe which means that an organisational presence exits in the port of destination to open and remove the piggy backing cocaine shipment.

<https://www.thedailyherald.sx/regional/63703-two-customs-officers-among-11-held-in-coke-investigation>

This is a news report of a Ndrangheta smuggling organisation that moved cocaine from Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe.

<http://www.efe.com/efe/english/portada/italian-spanish-police-shut-down-international-drug-trafficking-network/50000260-3144178>

This is a news report of the seizure of cocaine in Hamburg, Germany that was smuggled from Curacao.

<http://curacaochronicle.com/judicial/german-customs-seize-1580-pounds-of-cocaine-from-curacao/>

This is a news report of the violence associated with the interdicted cocaine shipment from Curacao.

<http://curacaochronicle.com/judicial/cocaine-from-curacao-leads-to-bloodshed-in-the-criminal-world/>

This is a news report of cocaine interdicted in scrap metal at Rotterdam, Holland shipped from Aruba.

<https://www.thedailyherald.sx/islands/64219-drugs-in-car-doors>

This is a news report on the escalating levels of cocaine seizures in Holland in 2016 especially at the port of Rotterdam and the plan to reduce the allocation of personnel at the port of Rotterdam charged with the interdiction of illicit goods.

<http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/09/cocaine-seizures-double-in-first-six-months-of-this-year-minister95920-2/>

This is another news report on the flood of cocaine imports targeting Rotterdam and the response of the authorities to the threat.

<http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/11/rotterdam-officials-worried-about-rising-cocaine-catches-fear-impact-on-society/>

This is a news report on the escalating levels of cocaine interdictions in Germany in 2014 and 2015 which clearly indicate that the illicit drug markets of Germany are now prime targets of EU organised crime.

<http://www.dw.com/en/germany-sees-sharp-spike-in-cocaine-imports/a-37845899>

It is now apparent that the globalised trafficking organisations are now involved in expanding the illicit cocaine markets eastwards towards the eastern member states of the EU and onwards and north eastwards towards Scandinavia and onwards. In this pincer movement Germany is the key and Norway is among the ripe fruit to be plucked from the vine. This is a poly drug, poly illicit product

movement as the intent is to maximise profits with the Mexican transnational trafficking organisations (MTTOs) and their affiliates being crucial to this new order being created in the EU with multiple illicit product flows including exports from the EU to the rest of the world especially small arms. See:

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/huge-firearms-depot-seized-during-operation-portu-now-revealed>)

The ascent to political power and the move to implement the stated goals of the 21st century mainstream racist nationalism/neo Nazi political movement of the EU in any EU member state/s will be the most potent windfall to EU organised crime since the end of WW2. The fixation on race and ethnic cleansing, the exit from the EU and the drive to create a new social order will consume resources, attention spans, unleash chaos and delegitimise social orders triggering various forms of violence and resistance where the will and the means to battle organised crime collapse. In this environment of social collapse and aggression organised crime thrives and will exert social power that threatens the very concepts of reason of state and governmentality where Europe is faced with a social order that is Third World no longer First World. The politics of the EU member states is now a clear and present danger to both the post ww2 European project and the EU project and it's the politics of the member states and the EU that created the vulnerabilities of both projects and the clear and present danger to both projects. In this netherworld of mirror images organised crime thrives hence the need for political discourse to assure to the contrary which is just another mirror image of Jim Jones, Jonestown, Guyana and that special drink.

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2017>