

ANNUAL REPORT



2016

PREFACE

The Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga continues its long-lasting tradition of publishing its Annual Report, which summarizes the activities carried out and the results achieved in 2016 by the Italian Law Enforcement Authorities in their fight against illicit drug trafficking.

As a whole, the results do not differ too much from those of the previous year. However it is worth mentioning and thoroughly analyzing the slight decrease in the volume of some substances in comparison with 2015.

The overall decrease of 14.86% is mainly linked to the reduction in the seizures of heroin, (-35.50%), amphetamine-type stimulants (-29.54% as doses and -22.53% in powder) and hashish (-64.81%).

As to heroin the data (although not very fluctuating) reflect the constant contraction of the illegal market of such substances, as shown by the ten-year trend of seizures, above all since 2008.

The decrease in the seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants (amphetamines, methamphetamines, MDMA and ecstasy-type substances) should not lead us to jump to conclusions. Indeed the overall number of synthetic drug seizures - including not only amphetamine-type stimulants but also other synthetic-type psychodysleptics (hallucinogenics) and psycholectics (depressors) drugs of abuse and medicines having psychoactive effects - is equal to 67.64 kg (powder), with an increase of 25.43% in comparison to the preceding year. If we compare these data with those referring to the ten-year trend, it comes out that the growth rate is extremely high. Moreover, also in terms of doses, if we combine amphetamine-type substances (12,825), other synthetic drugs (6,312) with the volume of pills and tablets of the "other drugs" (185,233) it comes out that the number of seizures carried out in 2016 has never been so high before.

As already shown in the previous report, the sharp reduction in the seizures of cannabis resin is to be ascribed to the readjustment of the trafficking routes, following the outstanding success of air and naval units actions in the three-year period 2013-2015. Moreover the data referring to 2016, though showing that reduction, are in line with the ten-year trend of seizures before 2013-2015.

By contrast, mention must be made of the sharp increase in marijuana seizures, with a peak value of 41.6 t, if compared with the ten-year trend, highlighting a rise of 347.15% with respect to the period before. This increase is mainly due to the resumption of marijuana trafficking between the two sides of the Otranto channel together with the huge rise (+233.65%) of cannabis plants in comparison with 2015. However, in absolute terms, only 465,000 plants, were eradicated, equal to 150-200 hectares, mostly located in Puglia, Lazio and Sicilia.

Also cocaine trafficking shows a stable trend (+16.12%). More than 4.7 t of cocaine were seized, the highest level ever reached in the last ten years, short below the record value of the three-year period 2011 - 2013.

On the whole if we analyze the data of drug seizures on a wide time span (ten-year period) -

except for the years 2014-2015 - 2016 was one of the most significant years.

The number of drug operations and the reports to the Judicial Authority are worth mentioning. In contrast with the year before, they increased by 23.04% and 17.63% respectively, reaching top level ranks in a ten-year assessment. The positive results of the law enforcement action should be however analyzed from another perspective, based on a new and more effective way of gathering the information provided by the local units, which allows the Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga to consolidate its data by the end of the reporting year.

Although the number of foreigners involved in drug trafficking and pushing (12,600) - i.e. one third of all persons reported - was in 2016 almost stable, it is worth stressing that the ethnic groups which ranked first in terms of people reported were Moroccans, Albanians, Tunisians, Nigerians, Romanians and Algerians - who are deeply rooted in Italy - rather than those populations involved in migration flows to Italy. This probably means that as far as drug trafficking is concerned, the threat is not directly posed by the populations fleeing from discrimination and wars.

As far as mafia-type organizations are concerned the 'Ndrangheta from Calabria played a primary role, consolidating its leadership in cocaine trade both in Italy and abroad, above all thanks to its huge financial assets and its power to infiltrate some key states involved in drug trafficking routes. As in the past, also in 2016 the other Italian organized crime groups involved were the Camorra and the Puglia-based crime networks. Although the transactions managed by the Camorra are not as important as those of the 'Ndrangheta, this syndicate has taken on a role of international importance, while Puglia organized crime has become a leader in marijuana trafficking coming from the Balkan region, exploiting the relationships with Albanian criminal groups.

The analysis of the investigations carried out in 2016 gives us some suggestions on future counteractive strategies. There are in particular two aspects which are worth dwelling upon. First of all the data on the seizures at the national borders, apart from the above-mentioned downward trend of cannabis resin seizures, highlight once again that the majority of the drug seizures in Italy occur in the coastal waters, in international waters and along sea borders. As in 2015, more than 90% of the drugs destined for the Italian consumer market (and then to Europe) about 22 t, was transported via maritime routes along the Mediterranean Sea to directions which varied according to the type of drugs smuggled. In the four-year period 2013-2016, with the support of D.C.S.A. and of the international bodies (MAOC-N, Europol, CeCLAD-M), more than 222 t of drugs were seized and dozens of people arrested following air and naval operations or at border areas, with an increase of 545.62% in comparison with the preceding four years.

These data should lead to a new investigative approach that urges a further strengthening of the counter-narcotic efforts along the maritime routes, trying to refine the techniques to

effectively curb this phenomenon in a phase preceding the drug consignments entry into Italy and their atomization in the black markets of the destination countries. It is necessary to create a forefront defence of the national territory and of the whole European Union countries affected by drug consumption, in cooperation with the law enforcement services of the coastal states. In this way, the organized crime groups could be hit in their vital infrastructures, also through the use of the legal instruments provided by the international maritime law. A well-planned and pressing counter-narcotic action on the large drug shipments arriving into our Country could be more cost-effective - thus saving financial and human resources - than focusing the attention on the widespread circulation of drugs in the consumption markets.

The sharp increase in the seizure of synthetic substances made in the reporting year introduces another operational issue which could lead to a realignment of the counter-narcotic strategies: the illicit online drug trade as driving force of chemicals and NPS abuse. As highlighted by the first results in this sector, this phenomenon represents an actual threat and raises operational questions and criminal policy issues about its connections with other illicit trades (weapons, counterfeit banknotes, virtual currency, credit and debit cards cloning, forged documents) and security alarm.

The Internet still represents an unexplored context: it is very difficult to penetrate with the traditional investigative tools, in particular, the darknet and the deep web where police operators can effectively move only with sophisticated and cutting-edge technology.

In this view, the adoption of a legislation allowing the DCSA Drug@online Section to carry out “undercover operations” over the Internet can no longer be postponed. This legislation would give the possibility to obtain evidence corroborating information found on the web, geo-referencing the import and distribution activities and alert targeted operational local services or units for the developments of investigation and subsequent police actions. While awaiting the adoption of mentioned regulation, for two years DCSA has organized a training course in favour of Law Enforcement personnel, a welcomed “undercover” programme on the development of online drug investigations.

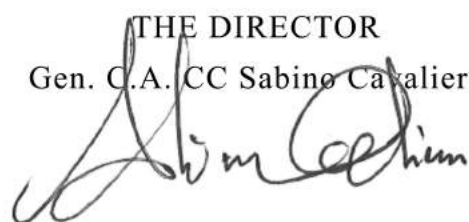
The other important challenge to cope with the drug trafficking and organised crime threats is represented by the improvement of investigative capacities and analysis aimed at identifying the financial flows fuelling the drug transactions and money laundering. The main law enforcement effort is to consider as essential parts of the investigation, the search for the flood of liquidity, the financial and commercial instruments used by the criminals to hide money derived from drug transactions in the folds of the legal economy, in the same way as the drug seizures and the collection of evidence against the suspects. In this phase, it should be advisable to use innovative procedures so to make the financial investigations more penetrating, introduce specific competences and a different investigative attitude in the counter-narcotic units, rather than reorganizing the whole law enforcement system.

This is the assumption of the Protocol of Understanding on the fight against drug trafficking financing and money laundering signed in 2016 by the DCSA and the National Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrorism Directorate. This agreement is an innovative and strategic tool to support the analysis of complex investigations and allow a more incisive and prompt investigative coordination and planning aiming at identifying the financial flows as well as potentially unknown areas of investigation. This Protocol is based on a wide range information exchange between the parties and the enhancement of intelligence and information capacities in their relevant sectors as well as on the investigative clues resulting from previous investigations (even closed ones). It is focused on the drug traffickers and, at the same time, on that dark and impenetrable multitude of subjects belonging to the world of finance and business, moving immense money flows stemming from drug trafficking and money laundering activities. We must acknowledge that the first results have been encouraging but only time will tell if it is necessary to make adjustments from an operational and organizational point of view.

As far as international relations are concerned, the reporting year will be remembered for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) attended by the Italian delegation, headed by the Minister of Justice Mr. Andrea Orlando and composed of DCSA officers and the DCSA Law Enforcement Attaché recently posted at the Italian Permanent Representation to the International Organisations in Vienna. Italy has actively contributed to the long and delicate negotiation on the Outcome Document where the world drug policy is outlined for the next years. Our country, through its representatives, has reaffirmed the essential points of the counter-narcotic action: integrated and balanced implementation of the three UN Conventions, focus on human beings, protection of health, proportionality of penalties for drug-related offences (categorically excluding the death penalty) and human rights. International police cooperation may be crucial in the fight against drug trafficking, provided that data and information circulation is strengthened and best practices are shared, above all in the emerging fields of NPS and of the abuse of unauthorised medicinal products having psychoactive effects.

As in the last few years, the dual requirements of minimising the editing costs and, at the same time, disseminating this report during international meetings, has suggested the publication of the Annual Report in electronic form only, with its translation in the English and Spanish languages.

THE DIRECTOR
Gen. C.A. CC Sabino Cavaliere



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PART ONE

STATUS AND TREND OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

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The criminal phenomenon in the fight against drug trafficking in Italy

THE CRIMINAL PHENOMENON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING IN ITALY

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THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING IN ITALY

For more than 25 years, the Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga has been playing a major role on the national scenario of counternarcotic activities, since, in accordance with legislation it has the specific task of coordinating all investigations and operations carried out by the Italian Law Enforcement Agencies in the drug field.

This coordination role mainly stems from an accurate collection and processing of information coming from national and international (having links with Italy) investigative activities. The analysis of all these data represents a fundamental information and technical support for investigations, enabling D.C.S.A. to ensure:

- a privileged point of view to observe this specific phenomenon; it minimizes the risks deriving from harmful overlaps, granting effectiveness and fluidity to the counternarcotic efforts all over Italy;
- international cooperation, which reflects the transnational features of this phenomenon, through the development of coordinated and shared forms of cooperation with foreign corresponding Agencies committed in related counternarcotic activities;
- an adequate knowledge of the drug trafficking changing dynamics in order to prevent the consolidation of new illicit markets and crime networks.

Again in 2016, the analysis of data on the fight against drug trafficking results and of investigative information, confirmed:

- the central role played by Italy on the European scenario, mainly caused by the persistence of the local criminal syndicates that, notwithstanding the ever-increasing effectiveness of the counternarcotic efforts, continue to represent "reliable" business partners above all for the organizations producing and supplying cocaine and hashish;
- the unceasing efforts of the Italian Law Enforcement Agencies in their fight against this phenomenon which continues to be the major source of funding for organized crime groups which directly threaten the security and stability of both local communities and of entire geographical areas, directly or indirectly ensuring,

financial liquidity to other types of small-scale crime/organized crime;

- the development of this phenomenon that, being the primary sector of interest for organized crime worldwide, is still a real and dangerous threat for the security and health of the communities, notwithstanding the national law enforcement actions and the international organizations activities;
- the entrepreneurial dimension of drug trafficking mainly due to the amassing of huge capital re-invested in illicit activities or laundered and then injected into the legal economy;
- the capacity to penetrate both the legal market, altering its rules, and the public administration bodies which are often permeable to forms of corruption and collusion.

At national level, drug trafficking is continuing to follow a quite constant trend. In particular:

- the cannabinoids (cannabis resin and herb, hashish and marijuana) still represent the most commonly abused substances.

The domestic counternarcotic efforts highlighted that:

- hashish, almost exclusively coming from Morocco, reached the Italian market through well-established routes; Spain played the role of European hub for the reception and storage of large quantities of this substance that will be then channelled towards the European consumption markets, especially to the French and Italian ones. In this regard, over the past few years, North-African drug traffickers have been searching for alternative routes to move massive amounts of hashish towards the maritime routes of the East Mediterranean Sea bound for Libya, Egypt and Turkey. In the last three-year period, in opposition to these new trends, relevant results were achieved thanks to the constant use of legal instruments provided by the implementation of art. 17 of the UN Vienna Convention of 1988 and of art.110 (d), of the UN Montego Bay Convention of 1982. In line with this strategic policy, during the above-mentioned periods, the Italian Law Enforcement Services, supported and coordinated by D.C.S.A., identified, intercepted and seized 5 motor-vessels

transporting a total quantity of over 80 tonnes of hashish and another vessel with 1.62 tonnes of hashish. These operations were part of a broader counternarcotic strategy conducted by Italy in cooperation with its main partners in the Mediterranean area, first and foremost, Spain, France, Morocco, Greece and Albania, with the support of MAOC-N and CeCLAD-M, aimed at:

- attacking this phenomenon at sea, before drugs are introduced into the national territories;
- striking the organized crime groups logistics (their fleets);
- developing intelligence cooperation so to approach the highest levels of command of the supplying criminal organizations;
- creating the conditions for an ever-increasing effective collaboration network.

Article 17 of 1988 Vienna Convention established that a State which suspects that a vessel of another nationality is trafficking in drugs, can ask the flag State an authorization to take adequate actions (to stop, board and search the vessel) and, if evidence of illicit traffic is found, to detain the vessel, arrest persons on board and seize the cargo.

Said measures can only be adopted if there are treaties, agreements or arrangements still in force between the Flag State and the other State party requesting the authorization to control the vessel.

At European level, this provision has found an answer in the Agreement on Illicit Traffic by Sea, implementing Article 17 of the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, open for signature of acceding States to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on January 31, 1995 whose ratification process, at national level, was promoted by the Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga.

The text entered into force on May 1, 2000 and has so far been adopted and ratified by 15 European Countries, among which 12 of the EU area while other 8 Member States (Italy among them) have signed it but not yet ratified and enforced through a domestic regulation.

On 30 September 2014, upon initiative of the competent

Ministers, the Council of Ministers approved the relevant draft law and on November 7 it was presented at the Chamber of Deputies for approval.

The key principle combining the Treaty provisions is based on the creation of a harmonised and integrated system of technical and legal instruments which give the European partners the possibility to carry out a valid, prompt and coordinated law enforcement action. Its widespread adoption at EU level, further enhanced the police cooperation levels in the counternarcotic sector and will shortly attain a substantial alignment of operational protocols of the Member States involved, in such a strategic sector for the fight against organized crime and terrorism. From the operational point of view, besides the traditional involvement of the Moroccan crime groups, a strong interest of the Italian networks continues to be reported. Among them, the Camorra and 'Ndrangheta have well-established interests in the Iberian Peninsula. In this case, drug trafficking is mainly operated overland, by lorries belonging to Italian companies (fruit and vegetables sector) or by adequately equipped cars (having false compartments which can be opened with sophisticated hydraulic systems);

- marijuana mainly originated from Albania and reached the Italian coasts of Puglia, Calabria and Sicilia by sea. Here, the Albanian suppliers are bonded together with the recipient networks, also with local organized crime syndicates. They resorted to light and ultralight planes piloted also by Italians, using improvised take-off and landing strips ad hoc realized in isolated areas in Albania. To this purpose, a remarkable domestic production must be taken into consideration: it is ensured by illicit crops mainly located in the warm and sunny South Italy regions (approximately 725,000 plants were seized from 2014 to 31 December 2016). Mafia-type organizations are well-rooted in these regions and this may suggest a renewed interest of these criminal groups in growing and then trafficking in the above-mentioned illicit substances;
- in 2015, the illicit market of cocaine essentially maintained the trend reported in the last five years. To this regard,

it must be highlighted that in addition to the quantities of cocaine seized within the Italian borders:

- the Italian law enforcement services, effectively supported by the DCSA, identified cocaine consignments before they actually reached Italy and gave the foreign police agencies the possibility to seize them so as not to jeopardise the investigations in Italy;
- in other cases, cocaine shipments were seized abroad (above all in South America and Spain) as a consequence of investigations carried out by the antidrug corresponding services, and having Italy as their final destination.

The Italian Mafia-type criminal organizations are considered key partners by major crime networks producing cocaine. Over the years, the 'Ndrangheta has gained the Colombian drug traffickers confidence and a dominant position in cocaine trafficking over the Italian territory and in those countries where this crime syndicate has branched out, such as Canada, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The reputation obtained in this specific sector and the huge availability of cash have allowed the Calabrian Mafia to maintain unchanged the modus operandi and the organization of its massive cocaine trafficking despite the modifications that this phenomenon has had in Colombia in the past few years. Among them, the most relevant change is represented by the dismantlement of the drug trafficking cartels and of "Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)" followed by the consequent pulverisation (the Colombians call it "atomisation") of the criminal scenario involved. However, this loss of reference points has not prevented the powerful Calabrian criminal groups from renewing their bonds on this changed scenario, ensuring their cocaine supplies aimed at fuelling their illicit business. This has been possible also thanks to the opportunities offered by the so-called brokers who are able to combine supply and demand and play a key role in the most relevant drug transactions. In most cases, these brokers also provide organization, supply and coordination of a series of practical services which are necessary for the whole supply chain.

One of the 'Ndrangheta strong points in this sector is given by their capacity to interact both with the suppliers and, horizontally, with the different groups of the same Mafia-type organization and with the other organised crime networks operating in Italy. In fact, for the Calabrian crime networks, drug trafficking (in particular, cocaine) is based on strategic alliances aimed at huge profits and further expansion. At present, the 'Ndrangheta is not fighting for the cocaine trafficking sharing and control; at most, nowadays different clans interact "on a par" with one another in order to make illicit transactions. Similarly, the 'Ndrangheta expertise, their skills and opportunities are used (against payment, obviously) by the other organizations involved in drug trafficking.

The high economic profits stemmed from cocaine trafficking as well as the enormous demand for this substance give other criminal organizations active in Italy the opportunity to operate here. In particular:

- the Camorra that operates at international level following the same modus operandi described above with regard to the 'Ndrangheta, even though they smuggle low-quality smaller volumes of this substance. The Camorra members have direct contacts with the Colombian drug traffickers through their brokers living in South America and use Camorra affiliates based in the Iberian Peninsula in order to obtain the drugs from local storage centres and guarantee the reinvestment of the drug proceeds as well as cash liquidity. However, unlike the 'Ndrangheta, numerous Camorra clans and new crime groups active in Campania, are not inclined to build strong alliances in the drug business that, on the contrary, causes bloody conflicts for the supremacy over the territories, in such a fragmented and complex scenario;
- the Cosa Nostra which has probably lost its past capacities in the drug trade management as in the nineties but is always interested in this specific criminal sector. This business generates huge profits (useful to support the affiliates in prison, as well as their families and the costs of proceedings) and it is a good way to control the criminal activities all over the territory.

In the absence of qualified contacts in the producing areas, the Sicilian organised crime groups seem to use their links with the Campania and Calabrian criminal networks;

- the organised crime in Puglia, active in this sector mainly through its ties with the Albanian crime syndicates, previously tried and tested in the marijuana trafficking. Even in this case, drug trafficking seems to represent the business sector more directly connected to the control of criminal activities within the area and, thus, often causing conflicts. This is also due to the coexistence of many Mafia-type organizations, above all in Bari and in the Salento area, where well-rooted Sacra Corona Unita groups are still active;
- the Albanian criminal organizations, often characterised by typical Mafia-type clans features, have become key figures on the European scenario mainly because of their ability to find their way into the drug trafficking chain, supervising the collection, storage and transport of consignments and acting as a real bridgehead between South America and Northern Europe;
- the heroin trafficking in Italy cannot be compared to that of Northern Europe, both for its spreading and for the level of its demand: in particular, according to Europol data, the British market ranks first in Europe. The analysis made in the last decade has highlighted that heroin abuse is mainly concentrated in the depressed urban areas. However it is a limited phenomenon, especially if compared to the level achieved in the 70s and the 90s. Moreover, Mafia-type organisations are not fully involved in heroin trafficking, except for the Albanian and Nigerian crime groups. The latter, through a tight-knit network of crime cells used to manage the single rings of the chain (brokers in the producing Countries, recruitment of human couriers, organization of shipments, logistics, storage, couriers management, drug collection and distribution, drug proceeds collection and transfer) have lately improved their skills in this sector, gaining broader competences both in the cocaine and in the heroin trade. To this regard, the growing relevance of the Nigerian criminal organisations determined the establishment of stockpiling

centres in East and South East Africa (Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia and South Africa), able to store Afghan heroin shipments from Pakistan (by sea, from the Port of Karachi) by sea containers or on board the numerous fishing fleets of Indian Ocean islands or from the coastal states. Once in Africa, heroin is moved to the West coastline where is then sent, by couriers, to the European and US markets. Heroin proceeds are then invested in the African Continent or on bank accounts of the rich Asian channels.

Heroin reaches Italy through three major routes:

- the Balkan Route with its alternatives, i.e. the maritime route (through the Adriatic Sea ports) and/or the land route (through Slovenia). The Albanian crime networks mainly use this channel in order to fuel the Italian illicit market with limited quantities of heroin (from 5 to 30 kg) concealed inside cars on board ferry-boats between the two Adriatic Sea coasts. This route is also used to move consignments towards North European Countries. In Puglia heroin trafficking is mainly carried out by the local crime rings, often having a Mafia-type nature and it is instrumental in establishing the supremacy of the numerous clans over the area. The interaction with the Albanian crime groups determines the management capacity of the crime sector;
- the maritime route, from Turkey, through which the Iranian and Turkish crime networks fuel the North European markets (the German, Polish, Baltic and above all British markets). They smuggle more relevant quantities of heroin (up to 100 kg) on board TIR trucks, generally linked to Turkish companies, concealed inside cover goods. In these cases, Italy is only a transit country;
- the air route, through human couriers, mainly used by the Nigerian crime groups as described above. To this regard, heroin was also smuggled by Pakistani nationals (sometimes air crew members) directly from their Country of origin;
- As to the traffic in other illicit substances, at present, Italian Mafia-type criminal organizations do not seem to be regularly and directly interested in it. This phenomenon

appears to be characterised by specific features. The synthetic drugs are easily available in the source Countries of North and Central Europe (The Netherlands, Poland, the Baltic Republic, Slovakia and Czech Republic), also because of their low prices and the free movement in the Schengen area and, above all, the use of the Internet.

For this reason, in Italy, the criminal organizations dealing with drug trafficking appear to be held back by these specific features whose market has overcome the usual patterns adopted for the other illicit substances.

These substances (also known as club drugs or rape drugs) are generally consumed in night clubs, discos or in holiday locations. Synthetic drug pushers usually have just a few doses with them. They are very quick in selling these doses and, in case they are intercepted by the police authorities, they may declare they are for personal use. This *modus operandi* tries to hinder the counternarcotic efforts that, nonetheless, continue to be regular and effective.

The rise in drug trafficking and NPS on the online platform is confirmed by the massive presence of e-commerce websites over the Internet which advertise their sale. Similarly, the increase in the seizures of huge quantities that, every day, are made by the Law Enforcement Authorities above all in airport areas intended for reception and storage of parcels from abroad.

LIST OF MAIN OPERATIONS

Operation ISABELA

This investigation was started by the Tax Police Unit of the Guardia di Finanza in Venice/I, following the arrest of a woman, having Italian nationality, occurred on 30.03.2015, at Venice airport for attempted smuggling of 1.1 kg of cocaine, concealed inside her luggage on the flight coming from Santo Domingo, via Paris/France.

The development of the investigation led to the identification in La Spezia of a Dominican national, who was charged of receiving the drugs on behalf of another Dominican national. On 26.10.2015, the Investigating Magistrate at the Court of Venice/I issued a preventive custody order against the above-mentioned Dominican national, who was later arrested

on November 4th.

Operation COLOMBA 2011

This investigation was carried out by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Catania into a drug trafficking organisation composed of key affiliates of Catania Mafia-type groups headed by the families BONACCORSI, CAPPELLO and SANTAPAOLA-ERCOLANO, closely tied to some Calabrian "ndrine" (clans) for the supply of remarkable quantities of cocaine.

The investigation led to the seizure of an overall quantity of 16.1 kg of cocaine, 20 kg of marijuana, 4 guns and 2 shotguns with ammunition, € 467,440 cash and to the arrest of 8 persons in flagrante delicto.

On 17.03.2016, the Unit in charge of this case executed a preventive detention order, issued by the G.I.P. (Judge of Preliminary Investigations) of the local Court, against 9 suspects.

Operation KISS

This investigation was started by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Catania, following the arrest of an Italian national in possession of 260 kg of marijuana in order to identify the supply channel of the drugs.

This investigation revealed that:

- the illicit substance was meant for the black market of



Operation KISS

the "San Giorgio" district in Catania, controlled by the Mafia-type organization headed by Santapaola-Ercolano families;

- the drug trafficking organizer was a fugitive who was then arrested;
- there was sound evidence against 7 subjects who, in January 2016, were arrested for criminal conspiracy to drug trafficking and arms-related offences, aggravated by the fact they acted in order to facilitate the Mafia-type activities of the "Santapaola-Ercolano" criminal network.

Operation DRUG EXPRESS 2013

This investigation was carried out by the Carabinieri in Marcanise (CE), into a criminal organisation dealing with drug trafficking and distribution run by the members of the so-called Camorra "scissionisti" (breakaway group), in several municipalities near Naples (Caivano, Melito and Marano di Napoli).

The investigation led to the seizure of an overall quantity of 4.150 kg of marijuana, 1.900 kg of hashish, 360 g of cocaine, 4.600 kg of crack, 1 g of lidocaine, a pistol with erased serial number and to the arrest of a person in flagrante delicto.

On 10.05.2016, 18 subjects were provisionally arrested for criminal conspiracy to illicit drug trafficking.

Operation DRUG IN THE FOG

This operation, conducted by the Guardia di Finanza in Gorgonzola (MI), was based on a drug trafficking carried out by Albanian nationals.

The investigation resulted in the seizure of 452.51 kg of marijuana, 19.222 kg of heroin, 6.228 kg of cocaine, 0.964 kg of hashish, 30 plants of marijuana and the arrest, in flagrante delicto, of 14 persons.

Operation CLEAN HOUSE

The investigation was made by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Torino into a criminal syndicate composed of Albanian nationals, operating in the mentioned area and having branches in Belgium.

This operation resulted in the seizure of 94.272 kg of marijuana, 5.165 kg of heroin, 50 g of cocaine, 5 kg of

monoacetylmorphine, 8 kg of cutting substances (caffeine and paracetamol) and in the arrest, in flagrante delicto, of 17 persons.

Operation RED FACED

The operation, conducted by the Tax Police Unit of the Guardia di Finanza in Pisa, was started following the arrest of an Albanian national in possession of 38.272 kg of marijuana, concealed inside a garage used as a storage centre.

Later on, other Albanian subjects were identified: they were involved in a prosperous cannabis trafficking.

The investigation led to the seizure of 48.932 kg of marijuana (of which 4.460 by the French police at the French-Spanish border) and to the arrest of 4 persons, in flagrante delicto, 2 of them were arrested by the French police services.

Operation AMICO MIO 2014

This investigation was started by the Carabinieri in Pavia following the arrest of an Albanian national, for possession of numerous firearms and other materials used for robberies. The telephone wiretapping revealed a criminal syndicate active in offences against the property and dealing cocaine and marijuana in the area of Pavia. The drug suppliers were Albanian nationals living in the Oltrepo Pavese area.

This investigation led to the seizure of about 179 kg of marijuana, 7.672 kg of cocaine, 102.5 g of hashish, a gun make Glock, a hunting rifle with ammunition, 3 precision scales, and to the arrest of 30 subjects (of whom 9 in flagrante delicto and 21 in accordance with two different orders issued by the competent Judicial Authority).

Operation THE JACKALS

This investigation was conducted by the Provincial Headquarters of Carabinieri in Venezia into some Albanian nationals who were active in the drug trafficking sector in the provinces of Venezia and Treviso.

The investigation resulted in the seizure of 8.322 kg of cocaine and in the arrest of 2 persons in flagrante delicto. Other 19 persons were reported to the Judicial Authority for violation of art. 73 of the Presidential Decree No. DPR



309/90: out of them, 11 were then arrested pursuant to a preventive detention order.

Operation UPGRADE

This operation was carried out by the Tax Police Unit of the Guardia di Finanza in Milan into a criminal syndicate composed of Slav nationals operating in Milan and having contacts with individuals active in the Netherlands, Serbia and Spain, all involved in a transnational drug trafficking.

This investigation was made in cooperation with the Spanish UDYCO, alerted by the DCSA Law Enforcement Attaché in Barcelona. They made surveillance and shadowing services into a key figure staying in Spain in order to plan the transaction of an unknown quantity of drugs.

During the operation 136 g of cocaine were seized and 4 persons were arrested in flagrante delicto.

At the end of the investigation, the G.I.P. (Judge of Preliminary Investigations) of the Court in Milan issued a restrictive measure against 12 suspects (of whom 10 in prison and 2 under house arrest): these measures were executed in February 2016.

Operation ASH 2015

This operation was conducted by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Torino into a criminal organization of Albanian origin, operating in Torino, with ramifications in L'Aquila and abroad (Turkey, France, Belgium and Germany).

During the investigation 1.110 kg of cocaine and 1.068 kg of heroin were seized and 6 subjects were arrested.

Operation BROWN APPLE 2014

This operation was conducted by Tax Police Unit of the Guardia di Finanza in Trento into an organised crime group composed of subjects from the Maghreb region, active in trafficking in drugs bound for the foreign and local illicit market.

The investigation led to the seizure of 49 kg of hashish, 600 g of heroin and cocaine, and to the arrest of 14 persons in flagrante delicto.

In accordance with evidence gathered during this investigation, the Judge of Preliminary Investigations (GIP) in Trento issued restrictive measures against 27 suspects, then arrested on 20.01.2016.



Operation CA BOM

This operation was carried out by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Rome into a criminal organisation of Albanian ethnic origin, active in trafficking in huge quantities of marijuana.

The developments of this investigation revealed:

- a special drug concealing method inside marble blocks, as shown in the seizure of 660 kg of marijuana made on 10.01.2014 in Anagni (FR);
- the involvement of some members of this organization in illicit activities such as burglaries.

The investigation resulted in the seizure of 960 kg of marijuana,

409 g of cocaine, 124 g of hashish and in the arrest of 27 persons in flagrante delicto, 9 whom for attempted robbery and aggravated robbery.

On June 9, 2016, the Unit in charge of this case executed a preventive custody order, issued by the competent Judicial Authority against 24 suspects, and arrested 12 persons.

Operation CAROLA

This operation was conducted by the GICO (Organised Crime Investigative Group) of the Guardia di Finanza in Campobasso into a drug trafficking criminal organization. The drugs were supplied by Puglia organised crime groups operating in the area of Foggia and Andria/Barletta/Trani. These Puglia crime groups were also linked to key figures of the Albanian criminal scenario, who had powerful vessels to transport the drugs from Albania to the Puglia coastline.

The investigation led to the seizure of 20.840 kg of hashish, 160 g of cocaine, and to the arrest of 8 persons (2 other persons were reported to the Judicial Authority but not arrested).

At the end of the investigations, in May 2016, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Larino (CB) issued a preventive custody order against 13 suspects.



Operation GATE 2014

Operation GATE 2014

This operation was made by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Lucca into a cocaine trafficking crime

group mainly composed of persons coming from the Maghreb region.

The investigation resulted in the seizure of 1.330 kg of cocaine, 503.56 g of heroin, 401.421 kg of hashish, and in the arrest of 32 persons in flagrante delicto.

On January 25, 2016, the Unit charged of the investigation executed a preventive custody order, issued by G.I.P. (the Judge of Preliminary Investigations) of the Court in Firenze, and arrested 10 Morocco nationals, for violations of Art. 74 of Law No. 309/90.

Operation DOHEN

This investigation was conducted by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Verona into an organized crime group, mainly composed of persons coming from the Maghreb region. This organisation dealt with cocaine and heroin trafficking and distribution in the area of Verona. The investigative results allowed the competent Judicial Authority to issue a preventive custody order against 4 suspects and a house search warrant against other 15 subjects, which was carried out by the Unit in charge of this case on 15.7.2015.

During this investigation 1.320 kg of heroin, 150 g of cocaine and a sum of € 13,000 were seized and 12 persons were arrested in flagrante delicto.

Operation ABATROX

The investigation was conducted by the State Police Criminal Investigative Unit in Brescia against an organised crime group mainly composed of Moroccan nationals who were trafficking in large quantities of drugs.

The results of this investigation allowed the Brescia Judicial Authority to issue a preventive custody order against 5 suspects, for violations of art. 73 and 74 of Law No.309/90.

In the course of this investigation, which ended with the execution of the above-mentioned order, 102 kg of cannabinoids (marijuana and hashish) and 2.300 kg of cocaine were seized and 14 persons were arrested in flagrante delicto and 5 persons were arrested pursuant to the preventive custody order.