

# Countering Cross-Border Crime in the Baltic Sea Region Research & Law Enforcement Perspectives

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# **Countering Cross-Border Crime in the Baltic Sea Region: Research and Law Enforcement Perspectives**

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## Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region was previously divided by the Iron Curtain but has become increasingly open over the last twenty years. The fall of Communism, the democratic transition and the adaptation to the market economy in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have made the region increasingly integrated, both economically and politically. The eastward expansion of the European Union in 2004 has further facilitated cross-border flows of capital, goods, services and people. This is a positive development but requires countries to coordinate and cooperate in order to handle the new challenges that have surfaced. One challenge is the growing influence of organized crime groups in the region.

The days when organized crime was primarily a matter of domestic concern are over. Today, citing the words of Antonio Maria Costas, former secretary general of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Organized crime has gone global, reached macro-economic levels and poses a serious threat to the stability, even the sovereignty, of states.”

The Baltic Sea Region is not immune to this. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania suffer from the influence of organized crime groups that are well connected with counterparts in the former Soviet Union. In Sweden, criminal motorcycle gangs which are a part of international organizations such as Hells Angels and the Bandidos are major players in the criminal world. Europol refers to the Baltic Sea Region as the “North East hub” of European organized crime and states in its *EU Organised Crime Assessment* (2011) that:

The North East hub remains a focus for the transit of illicit commodities to and from the Former Soviet Union and a base for violent poly-criminal groups with international reach.

Criminal groups are becoming increasingly transnational and nowadays operate across borders in order to avoid interference from law enforcement agencies. Instead of acting as an impediment to organized crime groups, borders sometimes shield criminals from interference from law enforcement agencies that are too focused on fighting domestic crime.

Since 2004, the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) has surveyed and analyzed trends in the development of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe. A series of seminars, workshops, conferences and fact-finding missions have been organized. An important objective has been to bring together researchers and practitioners from different countries in an environment conducive to the exchange of ideas, in order to identify common strategies for combating transnational crime. The meetings have been met with great interest by participants as well as authorities in the countries involved. These countries are Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Sweden.

This report summarizes the main findings of a workshop in Vilnius in March 2011. At the workshop, representatives of Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Swedish law enforcement agencies and researchers in the field of organized crime discussed recent trends in drug-related criminality in the region as well as how to improve police cooperation between the countries.

This report is divided into two parts. In the first part, law enforcement officers, analysts and researchers from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden review recent developments of organized criminal groups and trends of drug-related crime. In the second part, Aurelijus Gutauskas gives a brief overview on the field of organized crime, Fredrik Mattsson presents the criminal arborist perspective, a new working method for mapping the organized crime community, and Walter Kegö discusses the idea of a Baltic Joint Investigation Team; a new instrument for international police cooperation. The report concludes with a discussion of obstacles to and solutions for improving international police cooperation in the region.

# Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region

A considerable part of the workshop was devoted to a discussion of recent trends in drug-related criminality and the evolution of organized crime groups in the Baltic Sea Region. The first part of this report is based on the presentations by researchers and representatives of law enforcement agencies.

## Estonia

### Trends in Estonian Drug Related Criminality

The presentation on the Estonian organized crime and drug trafficking was held by Lt. Col. Dr. Risto Pullat of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board and Siim Nazarov, Senior Inspector of the Criminal Police Department of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board. They explained that the Baltic Sea Region is important for organized crime groups, especially regarding drug trafficking. Effective police work has ensured that the price of narcotics is high in the Scandinavian countries, making them attractive markets to drug traffickers. Russia on the other hand is both a source and a destination for drugs passing through the Baltic Sea Region. Drug trafficking takes place in both directions along an East-West axis.

### Cocaine

Cocaine is mainly trafficked to Estonia from the Netherlands and Spain. According to the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, less than one kg of cocaine was seized in 2010 in comparison to over five kg in 2009. One explanation for the low figure is that the drug is expensive and trafficking requires complicated logistics operations. Most of the cocaine transported to Estonia is believed to be bound for other countries.

Estonian consumers favor synthetic drugs such as mephedron over cocaine, which is easier to produce since it can be produced using legal ingredients. In 2010 one laboratory was exposed and six persons were arrested. According to unconfirmed information, the function of this laboratory was to conduct

research on the production process and sell that knowledge/formula to producers in Germany and elsewhere. The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board reported that 200 grams of mephedron were seized in 2010, which was an increase from 89 grams in 2009.

### Fentanyl

Fentanyl from Russia has (to some extent) replaced heroin in Estonia. Fentanyl is easier to smuggle than heroin. The drug is very potent and many fentanyl-related deaths were reported a few years ago. The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board report that seizures have diminished from about two kg in 2009 to about 0.5 kg in 2010.

### Amphetamine

Amphetamine is produced in Estonia but mainly by Russian producers. The precursors are purchased in Russia and the refined product is exported primarily to Finland.

Fewer seizures have been made lately, just as is the case of cocaine and fentanyl. In 2009 over 50 kg of amphetamines were seized. In 2010 the figure was down to roughly 17 kg. The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board could not provide specific reasons why the levels of amphetamine seizures have been reduced. They are expected to increase again in 2011.

The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board presented two successful investigations of amphetamine production at the workshop. In the first investigation, 10 persons were found to be involved in the production and sale of amphetamines. The group was constantly changing the place of production and used whatever equipment they had (cooking devices etc.) to produce the drugs. In the second investigation, one group produced and exported amphetamines to Finland. Some of the retailers used the product themselves. These two cases showed a very substandard modus operandi by at least some of the drug traffickers in Estonia.

### Gamma Hydroxybutyric Acid (GHB)

Gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) is popular in Estonia. Its main precursor is the detergent gamma-butyrolactone (GBL) which can be obtained legally. Some of the GHB consumed in Estonia is produced by organized crime groups but

the lion's share is produced in private homes by young Estonians with no previous criminal records. The authorities are searching for efficient measures to combat this. The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board reported a decrease in seizures of GHB from about 20 kg in 2009 to approximately 10 kg in 2010. The level of seized confiscated GBL has been at roughly the same, around 15 kg in both 2009 and 2010.

A debate over how the decrease in seizures should be interpreted followed the presentation. Almost all of the figures show a decrease after 2009. Can this be understood as being a result of a general decrease in overall drug consumption in Estonia? Participants discussed whether the decrease could be the result of law enforcement agencies operating with fewer resources in 2010, due to the financial crisis. One of the participants suggested that people had become poorer and could not afford to buy as much drugs due to the economic crisis.

### **Trends in Estonian Organized Crime**

Risto Pullat from the Estonian Border Guard Board analyzed the Estonian organized crime using a typology presented by von Lampe.<sup>1</sup> In short, European organized crime groups are categorized according to the level of society they operate on, i.e. lower level, middle class, political and economic elites. The groups are relatively homogenous and the openings for their criminal opportunities increase the higher up in society they operate. Pullat used this model to describe the Estonian organized crime community (fig. 1, see following page).

The figure to the left represents Estonian organized crime groups operating at the lowest level in society. Estonian robbery gangs operating in West European and Nordic cities fit into this category. Members of these groups often come from rural areas and/or are socially excluded and previously convicted. They travel to West European cities to commit burglaries or robberies on very short notice. Often they are not aware of which city they are assigned. Parallel groups can be operating in a country without knowledge of the others. It can be difficult for the police to control these groups as they are many and can easily replace their losses when members are apprehended.

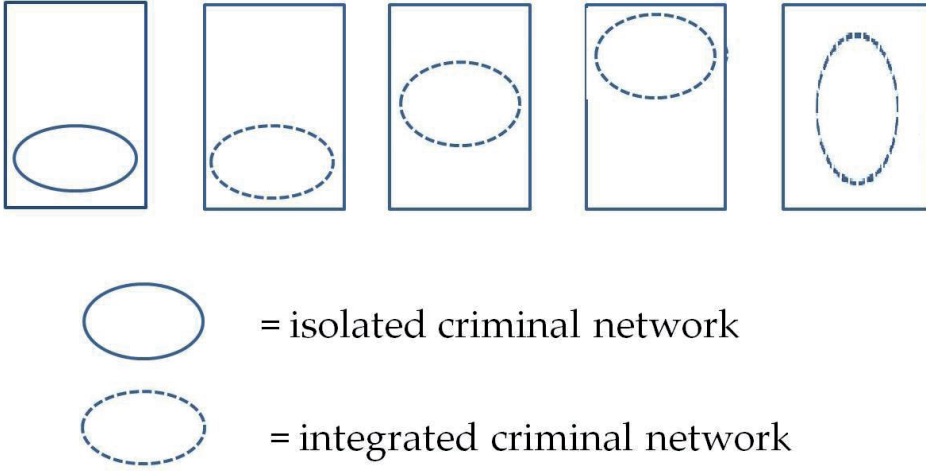
Groups in the second category also operate at the lowest level of society. Unlike the first category, these organized crime groups utilize the relative

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<sup>1</sup> Klaus von Lampe, "Organized Crime in Europe: Conceptions and Realities," *Policing*, vol. 2, No. 1 (2008): 7-17.

isolation of these communities and the knowledge they possess of banking systems and logistics, etc. Such groups are, for instance, the networks of drug trafficking relying on the foreign communities in Finland, Sweden and Norway.

**Fig. 1 Constellations of Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region**



Source: Klaus von Lampe, "Organized Crime in Europe: Conceptions and Realities," *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 2, no. 1, (2008) 7–17, as cited by Risto Pullat in slide 4 of his presentation "Constellations of organized crime in the Baltic Sea region." <sup>2</sup>

The third constellation of organized crime groups are the hidden criminal networks. They are rooted in mainstream society and connected to organized economic crime. In Estonia several "invoice factories" have been discovered. They involve citizens who on the surface are law abiding but are also often involved in economic crimes such as VAT scam. These groups often keep very low profiles.

The fourth constellation represents criminal networks consisting of members of the elites in society. Abuse or misuse of competencies for personal gains undertaken by public officials, politicians and business leaders

<sup>2</sup> Slides shown in this paper are those displayed by participants at the ISDP conference "Enhancement of the Use of Knowledge Gained through Research on Criminal Networks in the Law Enforcement combat of Border Crossing Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region" held on March 29–30, 2011.

are examples of actions taken by criminal networks operating at the highest level of society.

The fifth constellation represents networks consisting of political and economic elites allied with the criminal world and represented at all three levels of society. An example at the international level of such a merger between the lower and upper are organized crime groups in Southern Italy and Russia.

Workshop participants were of the view that some old-style criminals have left the criminal world and been able to reach high positions in society. The question is whether they have given up their connections with the criminal world, and have become law-abiding citizens, or whether they keep those connections to extort influence over politics or businesses. In the second case, it is difficult for the law enforcement agencies to combat them and to get them convicted as they are in a position to influence the work of law enforcement agencies. One of the participants pointed out that these persons probably do not regard themselves as criminals but rather as successful businessmen.

## **Latvia**

### **Trends in Latvian Drug Related Criminality**

Ugis Araks and Andris Kalnins of the Organized Crime Enforcement Department of the Latvian Criminal Police gave an overview of the situation in Latvia. They explained that the police have prioritized drug-related criminality and managed to stay on top of these crimes despite less funding. Drug-related crimes peaked in 2008. Over the last two years Latvian organized crime groups have been identified as quite active in recruiting couriers for drug trafficking from Latin America. A fairly large number of Latvian citizens travel as couriers for Latin American cocaine gangs. Most of them have financial problems or owe money to the traffickers. An event in which a young courier died when his capsule of cocaine burst inside his stomach has given the courier business bad publicity. More Latvians now take into account the risks that are related to travelling as couriers. However, the Latvian police suspect that some couriers are victims of human trafficking. Traffickers sometimes take hostages and force their friends or relatives to become couriers in order to get them free.

Drugs used in Latvia are of very low quality as local dealers dilute pure substances to generate more income. Since 2002 marijuana and amphetamine have been the staples of the illicit drug market in Latvia and provide traffickers with steady incomes. However, a new trend in the drug markets might be on its way. In the last couple of years, hashish has become increasingly popular and customs have made record seizures in 2011. Ecstasy is no longer popular, while customs have made record seizures in cocaine in 2010. A new trend has been observed in Latvia since 2008. An increasing amount of new types of psychotropic substances (e.g. piperisine, JWH group synthetic drugs and herbal mixtures including *salvia divinorum*) have been observed.

### **Trends in Latvian Organized Crime**

Criminal groups in Latvia with international connections have on average from five to ten members. These groups are primarily engaged in drug-related crimes, trafficking, fraud, smuggling of high-excise tax goods such as petrol, cigarettes and alcohol, as well as in economic crimes. Smuggling of cigarettes to Sweden is especially profitable as it has one of the highest excise taxes in the EU.

Contrary to common belief, group hierarchy is not always rigid and membership can vary from time to time. One group can have several leaders and members may rotate between groups. Two or more groups might even join forces in order to achieve a common goal. There is a trend that many organized crime groups are establishing contacts with counterparts in East European countries and the EU.

The two main bases of formation are:

- Common geographical area;
- Common area of criminal activities.

Latvia is located at the crossroads of drug-trafficking channels between West and Central Europe and Scandinavia as well as Russia, and between Russia and Scandinavia and Central Europe. A predominant strategy for Latvian organized crime groups is to utilize Latvia's potential as a transit country between East and West. These groups are also involved in drug trafficking outside of Latvian territory, for example the shipment of Latin



American cocaine to Russia via sea and air routes. One shipment consisting of 202, 78 kg was seized by customs in April 2010.

## Lithuania

### Trends in Lithuanian Drug Related Criminality

Lithuanian drug related criminality was dealt with by Nerijus Banys, chief investigator within the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau. Lithuanian organized crime was dealt with by Aurelijus Gutauskas who based his presentation upon his contribution in the book *Organized Crime and the Financial Crisis: Recent Trends in the Baltic Sea Region* (ISDP, 2011).

Lithuania's geographical proximity to the Belarus Republic and the Russian Federation (through Kaliningrad) has facilitated cross-border smuggling of drugs and other merchandise across the EU's external border. Primarily two factors contribute to this development:

- Many Lithuanians have family and historic ties across the border;
- There is a big difference in the price of certain commodities, and thus profits, that can be exploited by traffickers.

### Hashish

Lithuanian criminals have a strong position in Spain and are not afraid of local criminals (sometimes Lithuanians even steal from local criminals). These groups are involved in the trafficking of Moroccan hashish through Central Europe to Lithuania. As hashish is not a very popular drug in Lithuania most of it is being transported to Scandinavia and Russia.

### Heroin

The smuggling of heroin from Central Asia (mostly Afghan) to Lithuania is mainly carried out by Roma groups and Central Asian criminals. Lithuanian police have difficulties in investigating the traffickers as they often are rather closely related ethnically and can be difficult for law enforcement to infiltrate.

## Cocaine

The situation regarding cocaine resembles that of hashish. Like hashish, cocaine is not so popular in Lithuania, but Lithuanian criminals are involved in international trafficking of the drug. The police know of Lithuanian criminals who operate in South America and organize shipments to Europe. Lithuanian citizens are deceived into becoming drug couriers. Transporting the drugs in a suitcase seems more common than swallowing them in a capsule. At least one Lithuanian group cooperates with Nigerian drug traffickers to bring cocaine into Switzerland and Germany.

## Synthetic Drugs – Amphetamine-Type Stimulants

Amphetamine and methamphetamine-type stimulants are produced and smuggled to Scandinavia, Belorussia and Russia. Trafficking routes to Scandinavia either traverse the land route over Poland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, or go directly to Swedish harbors via ferries from either Lithuania or Estonia (first passing through Latvia).

## Cooperation

The Lithuanian police have had successes in cooperation with its counterparts from neighboring countries. In 2010, ten seizures were made in collaboration with foreign partners which resulted in the seizure of 34 kg of methamphetamine, 20 kg of amphetamine, 29 kg of mephedron, 12 kg of precursors (bk-PMMA) and the detention of 19 persons.

## **Trends in Lithuanian Organized Crime**

In 2010, there were 23 active organized crime groups in Lithuania. Over the last two years, the number has remained the same. Higher-level groups are characterized by long-term activity or are reconstituted by members of groups that are broken up or dismantled. The leadership is constantly renewed by new, young members or criminals who have served prison sentences.

The most significant trend is the shift in power between the older and younger generations in the Lithuanian organized crime community. The younger generations are gaining control and seeking to increase their influence at the expense of older members. Lithuanian groups are also aiming to

become more interregional. The dominant groups expand their authority and influence the lower-level groups in different regions. Some have sought dominant positions when members of higher-level groups have returned from correctional institutions. Due to the change in the leadership, organized crime groups have experienced conflict and dishonesty among accomplices. The desire to control an area can stimulate violence. Interregional groups support their followers during conflicts between local groups. Firearms are used in campaigns of influence or revenge. People are kidnapped, injured or killed and their property is destroyed.

In some situations, organized crime groups make deals rather than resort to violence. They sometimes share a market and specialize in different trades. There is a trend for weaker groups to join bigger ones to find a niche within the larger organization. This development seems to be increasingly common among groups with international connections.

In 2009 and during the first semester of 2010, crime indicators in Lithuania decreased. However, there was an increase in crimes committed by organized crime groups. The number of criminal acts related to murder and attempted murder, possession of weapons and seizures of weapons, appropriation of property, extortion, destruction of property, drug distribution, and excise-goods smuggling increased in the regions of activity of the most influential groups. The crimes committed by these groups are characterized by high levels of planning and application of special means and measures.

Smuggling and the distribution of drugs and excise goods are the most important means for organized crime groups to gain power. These groups have created an infrastructure in the drug trade and developed supply chains and distribution networks in almost all regions of the country. Even group members who are in prison remain in the drug trade and control it. Smuggling is a strong factor encouraging the creation of new groups specializing in this function.

In certain regions of Lithuania, the superior organized crime groups are active only in smuggling. Groups controlling international relations ensure the supply of illicit commodities, while lower-level groups organize the distribution and/or carry out the smuggling. Competition for influence over the market drug markets is most frequent at the retail level.

Property extortion is also a criminal field in which organized crime groups have strong subgroups or new specialized groups. Groups acting at the international level extort luxury cars and watercraft, cargo shipments,

and agricultural and construction equipment. Property is seized from trade points and residential premises in different ways. In 2009, there were many cases of burglaries targeting agencies where large amounts of money were kept or armed raids on these agencies were organized.

### **Transnational Links**

The geographical location of Lithuania encourages international activity by organized crime groups. The country is located at the crossroads of illicit commodities traffic. The locality of groups determined their specialization, when it came to the control of regions of the external European Union border. Some use their influence at the Belarusian border; others at the Russian border. Close international relations with neighboring countries are also typical of local organized crime groups like those at the internal EU borders with Latvia and Poland.

Free movement of people and commodities inside the EU facilitates the shipment of illegal cargoes, and insufficient external border security allows smuggling. The increasing trade in used vehicles in Lithuania has become a factor in the infrastructure for handling stolen property, with vehicles stolen in Western countries being exchanged for drugs. This has made it possible for Lithuanian organized crime groups to play an influential international role in heroin smuggling from the East to the West. The proceeds of crime are laundered through businesses in the financial and construction sectors.

In 2009 and 2010, Lithuanian organized crime groups in Russia used opportunities related to the acquisition of excise goods to smuggle into the West, and then into the Netherlands. The goods smuggled included cocaine, hashish, cannabis, amphetamine, methamphetamine and ecstasy (MDMA), heroin (in the region of Kaliningrad), and stolen vehicles. These groups were also involved in the running of legal businesses. Some members of Lithuanian groups have settled in Russia.

Also in Poland, Lithuanian organized crime groups used opportunities related to the transportation and handling of smuggled excise goods, the counterfeiting of cigarette products, the transportation of smuggled drugs, vehicle theft, and the use of counterfeit electronic payment instruments.

In 2009 and during the first half of 2010, Lithuanian organized crime groups in Germany handled and smuggled cigarettes, transported smuggled drugs, traded in heroin, managed prostitution networks, engaged in

human trafficking, seized vehicles and other properties. They also distributed forged identity documents and euros, transported illegal immigrants, purchased property, ran legal businesses, laundered money, and engaged in corruption. Some members of these groups are serving prison sentences in Germany.

In Latvia as well, Lithuanian organized crime groups handled and smuggled cigarettes and pure alcohol; transported and handled heroin, cannabis, and ecstasy (MDMA); counterfeited euros; and committed various thefts on automobiles, pipelines, cargoes, and equipment and chemicals for agriculture. The groups also engaged in the legalization of stolen vehicles, the use of false electronic means of payment, fraud, document forgery, and the running of legal businesses. In Estonia, they smuggled drugs and ran legal businesses in 2009 and 2010. In Finland they smuggled cocaine, amphetamine, and methamphetamine and seized property. Some members of these groups are serving prison sentences in Finland. In Sweden they transported and handled cannabis, amphetamines, and ecstasy (MDMA); stole cars and watercraft; and seized other properties. Some members of Lithuanian groups have settled in Sweden. In Denmark they transported and handled smuggled methamphetamines; stole cars, watercraft and parts; and confiscated property.

### **Active Organized Crime Groups in Lithuania**

The main sources of information about the major organized crime groups in Lithuania and their activities are reports issued by the Organized Crime Investigation Division of the Criminal Police and by Lithuanian police units between 2009 and 2010. Some data also come from the State Border Guard and the Customs Criminal Services. A number of organized crime groups have been identified.

#### **Agurkas**

The Agurkas group is one of the strongest groups in Lithuania. The level of organized crime in the country depends on its activity. It also influences trends in organized crime committed by Lithuanians abroad. Its criminal activities cover the production and distribution of narcotics; the smuggling of excise goods; theft of vehicles from residential premises; robbery, extortion, fraud, human trafficking and the organization of prostitution; currency

counterfeiting, and document forgery. From 2009 to 2010, it is also suspected of criminal acts related to illegal activities by companies, possession of illegal property, possession of weapons, disturbance of public order, resistance to and offenses against officers, unlawful deprivation of freedom, threats of murder, maiming, and attempted murder and sexual abuses.

The Agurkas group is active mainly in Russia, Latvia, and Estonia. The group also has some activities in Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Ukraine. In the Baltic region, it poses a threat in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Russia. In the EU, its activities affect Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, and eastern Ukraine. All of these countries are affected by its drug distribution and property confiscations. The grey economy in the West is stimulated by the handling of smuggled excise commodities and the handling of property seized in the East.

#### Beglikas

The criminal activities of the Beglikas group include drug and alcohol smuggling, money laundering, and other crimes against the financial system. It is active in Latvia, Estonia, and Russia, as well as in Spain. Its power and influence may be related to the criminal authority of its leader, his connections, his ability to entrench his influence and the effectiveness of countermeasures to drug smuggling on the Spain–Lithuania–Russia route. Its power is also increased by the economic activity of related legal businesses. Society is harmed by the drug distribution. The increasing economic power of this group also poses a threat.

#### Šmikiniai

The criminal activities of the Šmikiniai group include the smuggling and distribution of drugs, smuggling and distribution of excise commodities, robbery, theft of luxury vehicles, theft from vehicles, extortion of property, handling of stolen property, distribution of counterfeit money, organization of prostitution, possession of weapons, destruction of or damage to property, bodily injuries, and money laundering. The group is active in Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Spain, and Russia, as well as in Switzerland and Iceland. In the Baltic region illegal commodities are transported through Latvia and Estonia. Drugs are distributed and property seized in

the region of Scandinavia. The group is a threat to many countries in north-west EU and Russia because of cocaine smuggling from South America. The societies of these countries suffer because of drug distribution and money laundering. Victims of human trafficking from Lithuania and the East may be exploited in prostitution networks.

#### Pemaieiai

The criminal activities of the Pemaieiai group include drug production, smuggling, and distribution; the smuggling and distribution of counterfeit money; extortion of property; fraud; and robbery. These thefts include vehicles, motorcycles, and water motorcycles; handling stolen property; crimes against the economy and the financial system; money laundering; violating public order; possession of weapons; destruction and damage of property; illegal deprivation of freedom; bodily injury, and murder. The group is active in Latvia, Estonia, Germany, and Russia, and in many other EU countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Bulgaria, Italy, and Spain. Drug smuggling is facilitated by the free movement of people and commodities within the EU and weak external border security. This group uses quasi-legal businesses in the fields of haulage, agriculture, and finance for criminal purposes. It uses EU financial support to strengthen its powers. Thanks to communication technologies, distant members can maintain constant contact.

#### Miliai

The criminal activities of the Miliai group include drug smuggling and distribution, the smuggling of excise commodities, property extortion, crimes against the economy, and money laundering. The group is found in Sweden and Russia as well as in Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belarus, and Ukraine.

#### Buduliai

The criminal activities of the Buduliai group include drug smuggling and distribution as well as cigarette smuggling. It is active in some regions of Latvia that play an important role in drug smuggling, and in Norway where it connects with immigrants from Lithuania. Latvia suffers from the

activities of the group and organized crime groups also encourage trade in drugs and cigarettes smuggling in Norway.

### Švinius

The criminal activities of the Švinius include cigarette smuggling, money laundering, and crimes against the economy, fraud, property extortion, robbery, assault and possession of weapons. This group is found in Latvia, Germany, and Russia, as well as in the United Kingdom and Belarus where organized crime groups runs quasi-legal businesses, operates in the field of business construction, and makes use of corruption.

## Sweden

### **Trends in Swedish Drug Related Criminality**

#### Amphetamine Type Stimulants

Stewe Alm, the Swedish National Bureau of Investigation, outlined the situation in Sweden. According to him, the amphetamine on the Swedish market has two major sources. In the Western Region, comprising the Netherlands and Belgium, the production is characterized by a high level of professionalism and entrepreneurship. Producers sell high quality amphetamine on demand to customers who arrange with the logistics of shipments into Sweden. Trafficking is mainly done through Germany and Denmark.

In the Eastern region, producers in Poland, Lithuania and Estonia are in charge of the whole production chain. Organized criminal groups run production and traffics and sells the drugs at a retail level in Sweden. The trafficking is mainly done through Poland, Germany and Denmark but also directly to Sweden via ferries. Lithuania is the dominant source for methamphetamine to Sweden.

The demand for and production of Ecstasy has declined lately as it has been surpassed by mephedron and other types of new drugs that can be ordered over the internet. Many of these drugs are not illegal since authorities have not yet classified them as narcotics. Currently 25 drugs are on a waiting list to be classified as narcotics by the Swedish authorities. As soon as one drug is about to be classified, retailers sell their stock cheaply and move on to prepare the sale of the next drug on the list.



## Cocaine

Drug cartels in South America focus increasingly on Europe for the export of cocaine. Cocaine from Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil and Peru enter the European market directly by sea in the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal. These countries constitute regional hubs through which cocaine is later distributed by land through Central Europe, Germany and Denmark to Sweden. South American traffickers also utilize states in West Africa as transit for cocaine to Europe.

Even though Sweden is rather small, the market availability has increased lately and prices are decreasing. Availability of cocaine in Sweden has increased and prices have decreased quite dramatically. Online trade in cocaine contributes to the increased availability.

## Hashish

Ninety percent of the hashish consumed in Sweden is Moroccan. Moroccan authorities make efforts to stop the trade, but it does not cease probably because the production is too closely connected with the local economy. The majority of the hashish is transported through Spain and Portugal, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark to Sweden. Traffickers utilize trucks that customs services are reluctant to stop, such as shipments of flowers or other sensitive goods.

## Heroin

The demand for heroin is attenuating, and the drug is not as attractive to users anymore. A majority of the heroin consumed in Sweden is from Afghanistan. Most of it is transported through the Balkan route to Central Europe, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. The Northern drug trafficking route does not seem to be of relevance to the Swedish market.

## **Trends in Swedish Organized Crime**

In Sweden, criminal motorcycle gangs such as the Hells Angels and the Bandidos are often difficult for law enforcement agencies to infiltrate. The gangs utilize international connections to traffic drugs into Sweden, but

maintain a coordinative role and refrain from becoming directly involved in retail sales.

Sales at the local and retail levels are managed by domestic organized crime groups that have profound knowledge of local markets and means of distribution to customers.

Sweden's membership in the Schengen Area and its liberal immigration policy has created an environment in which many immigrants and their children feel socially and culturally alienated making them more receptive to joining gangs that commit crimes. The creation of ethnic enclaves in Sweden (many of them marginalized and suffering from severe social problems) has further contributed to the growth of criminal organizations along ethnic lines. Marginalization and segregation have created a situation in which organized crime groups can recruit members and benefit from their surroundings. Black Cobra is a criminal network originally from Denmark based on vulnerable social connections and operating mainly in Swedish suburbs.

International organized crime groups from countries such as Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Vietnam and the Former Yugoslavia utilize contacts among fellow countrymen in some areas in Sweden to establish contact points for criminal activities. Sometimes international criminal groups place members in these areas to function as contact points for a longer period of time; sometimes they use these contacts for temporary business trips.

### **The Swedish National Bureau of Investigation – Intelligence Section**

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) provides investigation and criminal intelligence support for cases involving crimes with nationwide or international ramifications. Its efforts target:

- Organized crime groups operating from Eastern Europe and Asia;
- Organized crime groups operating from Western Europe, Western Africa and South America;
- Organized crime groups operating from the Balkan Region and Turkey;
- Organized crime groups operating with bases in Sweden – Criminal Motorcycle Gangs and other criminal networks, and;
- Organized crime groups operating involved in severe crimes such as illegal immigration, THB, Internet related crimes and serial robberies.

## **Improving Policing and Cooperation**

In the second part of the workshop, discussions aimed at identifying weak points in the current efforts to tackle transnational organized crime. Suggestions for how to improve collaboration against transnational organized crime were voiced.

### **Organized Crime from a Research Perspective**

Researchers studying organized crime face a number of challenges. First, researchers as well as governments, media and the general public, disagree on the nature of organized crime; how it impacts us; how serious it should be taken; and what to do about it. Even if researchers would agree upon a common definition of organized crime, the concept is changing due to the impact of globalization. Aurelijus Gutauskas presented a brief overview over the state of the art in the field of organized crime research.

### **Globalization and Crime**

It is not an exaggeration to say that globalization (understood here as the process in which communications and technology have improved rapidly) has had a huge impact on the evolution of contemporary organized crime. Demand for illegal goods, such as changing trends in the global drug markets, have made it possible for transnational organized crime groups to expand and diversify its businesses.

Global trends in illicit goods and services shape local demand. Ecstasy is becoming increasingly popular in many Third World countries. Local demand for illicit arms and mercenaries meets with global supply through arms traffickers and transnational organized crime groups. Environmental regulations make waste dumping in third world countries profitable. The growth of the Internet has provided organized crime groups with excellent opportunities in gambling, prostitution and pornography.

Globalization has also served to generate incentives for particular actors to participate in illegal actions. Differences in wealth levels and immigration laws have facilitated human smuggling and human trafficking between and

within countries. The easing of border restrictions has facilitated cross-border trafficking of contrabands and money flows (money laundering).

Some states currently have less ability to control or contain illegal activities. Severe corruption, weak institutions and poor governance make organized crime groups resilient to interventions from governments.

### **The Paradox of Transnational Organized Crime**

Even if organized crime is becoming increasingly internationalized, transnational organized crime is still shaped by its historical, social, political and cultural specifics from which it once grew. Local specifics still persevere. Applying a precise and narrow definition of transnational organized crime that fits all local varieties has yet to be done. A global definition of transnational organized crime must be narrow enough to avoid political misuse and legal uncertainties while at the same time broad enough to include all the different forms and shapes that organized crime can take.

Definitions used by law enforcement and juridical definitions used by the UN and the EU tend to be broad as well as vague and/or empirically inaccurate. In fact, organized crime, or criminal entrepreneurship, has become more random, improvisational, opportunistic and disorganized. When it is organized, it is partly due to the overlap with legal structures (either the legal economy or the state itself).

Governments seldom approach transnational organized crime from the perspective of prevention. Instead they tend to favor pro-active repression or situational prevention. There has been an explosion of national and international security agencies assigned to combat organized crime.

### **Transnational Organized Crime as a Threat to Security**

Transnational organized crime is often regarded as a threat to security imbued with notions of an alien conspiracy or foreign infectious disease. Issues of immigration, terrorism, and drugs are fused together into the concept.

There is no common agreement on the "seriousness" of this threat, however. Does the threat emanate from the crimes actually committed or from the mere fact that organized crime groups exist and operate outside the law? Furthermore, the differences in penal codes between countries reflect the fact that states perceive the gravity of certain forms of criminality differently. Criminal offences and sentences vary from countries to country.

We can depict a line of division between the developed and the developing countries. From the developed countries point of view, transnational crime is often (but erroneously) understood as criminal activity originating in developing countries and crossing their borders. Examples of this could be the exportation of cocaine, or illegal migration from South to North. The developing world might on the other hand experience the trade in stolen arts, animals or waste disposal to be matters of urgency.

### **Mapping Criminal Networks from the Criminal Arborist Perspective**

Any police organization has limited resources, and needs to prioritize among potential targets. In order to do this efficiently, sound intelligence is required. Traditional police intelligence categorizes criminals along ethnic structures, mafia-like structures or other types of group structures. Analysts are interested in how and to what extent different criminal constellations interact with each other. The analysis is usually conducted primarily at the group level. Swedish analyst Fredrik Mattson gave a presentation of the criminal arborist perspective, a new working method used by the Swedish police intelligence.

#### **One Criminal Network Consisting of Individuals**

The criminal arborist perspective puts individual relations at the center of analysis. It recognizes the existence of organized criminal groups, but treats the organized criminal community as one single entity consisting of individuals that form temporary sub-constellations. Analysts focus on individual relations, not crime groups. By identifying links between individual perpetrators, intelligence can proceed to map out the larger organized criminal community.

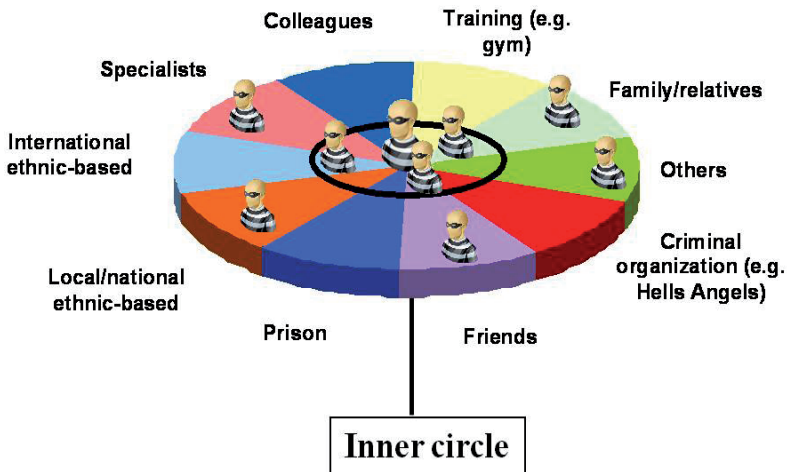
The criminal arborist perspective was pioneered by the U.S. psychologist Stanley Milgram. He used the concept of “six degrees of separation.” According to him, every American is on average approximately six steps away, by way of introduction, from any other American. The concept of six degrees of separation is relevant to the studies of social networks.

Criminals, just as anybody else, have friends and acquaintances, of which some are more intimate than others. The persons that we trust and know well belong to our inner circle of friends. However, we almost never spend time with all of them at the same time. Circumstances like interest

and availability will decide whom of our friends we will invite over for dinner or go see a movie with. Apart from having an inner circle of close friends, all of us also have an outer circle of people that we are acquainted to but do not know very well.

Criminal relations function in the same way. The criminal arborist perspective rests on the assumption that modern organized criminal groups are loosely organized and that criminals operate within flexible network like projects. Perpetrators chose crime partners based on trust and skills required for the specific activity. Criminals are more likely to be partner with persons in their inner circle whom they trust well. However, sometimes it might be necessary to risk recruiting outsiders who possess special skills required for a certain job.

**Fig. 2 An Individual's Contact Network**



Source: Andreas Gårdlund, Fredrik Mattsson, Kim Nilvall, Slide 3, Criminal Cooperation The Criminal Arborist Approach (CAP), March 29, 2011.

### **The Organized Crime Community – One Big Tree**

Metaphorically, organized crime groups are understood in terms of a big tree consisting of several branches of different sizes. The top leadership is represented by the thicker branches whereas the medium sized branches make out individuals somewhat in the middle of the organization. The weaker

branches, those that are furthest out, consist of those that are most vulnerable to police surveillance and infiltration. The tree metaphor is useful in understanding how police should confront organized crime. It will most likely be very difficult to infiltrate groups and get to the top leaders directly as they will most likely be protected from infiltration by loyal members (in their inner circle). Even if law enforcement agencies were to convict individuals at the top level, it is still unsure whether this would actually eliminate the organizations or if those leaders would just quickly be replaced.

On the other hand, to strike at the weakest branches, the underlings, might in worse-case scenarios, make the criminal constellations stronger as it would give them the opportunity to weed out weaker individuals and replace them with stronger ones who can endure police pressure better. The objective for the intelligence-led police work is to identify key individuals at the mid-level which are crucial for the criminal networks and at the same time vulnerable to infiltration by law enforcement agencies. If applied rightly, arborist police intelligence can identify those individuals, allowing their arrest and possibly open up for a direct assault at the top leaders.

While an arborist is trying to cut off the sick branches of a tree in order to save it, police intelligence using the criminal arborist perspective wants to do the opposite by identifying and cutting off those branches which are vital for the tree's survival.

### **The Criminal Arborist Perspective Put to Practice**

First, the police need to decide upon an area or task in which they want to focus their efforts on, for instance, drug trafficking, diffusing gangs, getting rid of criminality in a certain geographical area or dismantling ethnic networks.

The criminal arborist perspective should then be applied to the designated area in five steps.

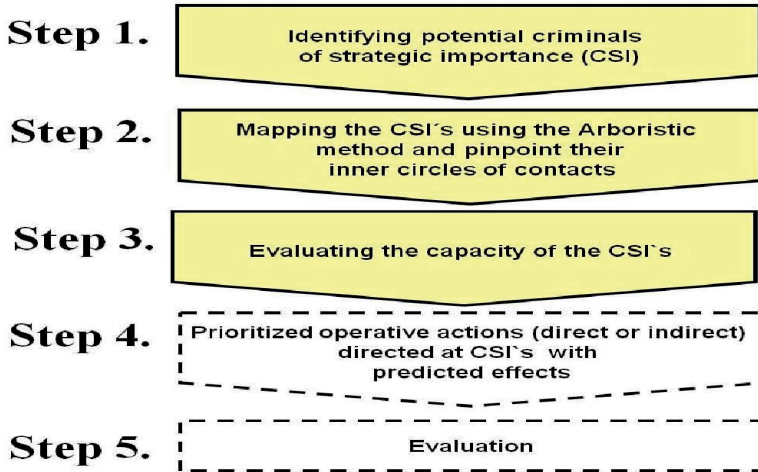
#### **Step 1**

The first step for intelligence is to broadly map out persons of strategic interest whom the police already suspect having potential to commit crimes in the designated area of interest. These are called "Criminals of strategic importance" (CSI). Their number can at the onset be fairly large.

When assessing persons, analysts look for the individuals with long-term organizational skills; how well they manage to keep profits derived

from crimes; and how well their criminal capabilities have developed over time – has their criminal repertoire broadened?

**Fig. 3 The Criminal Arborist Perspective**



Source: Andreas Gårdlund, Fredrik Mattsson, Kim Nilvall, Slide 6, Criminal Cooperation The Criminal Arborist Approach (CAP), March 29, 2011.

### Step 2

The second step is to map the individuals' contacts and personal networks. First, intelligence should record when criminals meet, and how often they stay in contact with each other in order to see who is in contact with whom, and how often. The second step goes deeper and evaluates the strength of these contacts by assessing how long have they known each other; are they friends on Facebook; are they childhood friends; do they run companies together; have they committed crimes together previously; have they visited each other in jail etc. Such factors are indicators of the quality of their relationship. This analysis will provide intelligence with a map of the criminal relations in which some persons will stand out as more connected and more active than others. This map will most likely reveal some interesting patterns,



which would have otherwise been overlooked. Some individuals will have a very large network of friends in the criminal world, while others mostly know and commit crimes within a limited group of people that all know each other very well. Other individuals act as bridges between different criminal constellations and are therefore crucial in forging bonds between groups. If a perpetrator has several friends in his inner circle, who have ties to different constellations of criminals, then that person sits on top of a valuable asset and is thus of interest to the police.

Intelligence can use several means to get to this information. Apart from using surveillance, informants, questioning or similar means of acquiring information, unorthodox methods can also be used.

An example of unorthodox methods was when the Swedish police mapped a well-known criminal's inner circle by studying who arranged and attended his stag party. Eventually the number boiled down to around 20. It turned out that they were very loyal to the criminal and could not refuse to help him.

After the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative factors, intelligence will have a solid knowledge on whom to focus attention on and who can be excluded from further investigation. The original list of potential CSIs has thus been made considerable shorter.

### Step 3

In the third step the operational capacity of CSIs to commit crimes and capacity to endanger are evaluated. When the operational capacity is assessed, intelligence agencies are interested in knowing if the CSIs are running illicit companies and/or how much money they make from this and other crimes. Intelligence agencies are also interested in knowing what their criminal turnover is; how much influence they have over others (through threat and intimidation); what pressure they exert over public officials and how violent they are.

Each CSI is given a value of his/her operational capacity together with judgment and motivation in a "Personal Analysis Document." The values range from high (capacity to kill someone), medium, low and no indications. Sometimes intelligence will be unable to assess capacity at all. In this case the score "unknown" will be given. The personal analysis document will serve as an overview of the individual perpetrator, and function as the collective memory of the police.

Table 1. Mapping an individuals contact network and inner circle

## Criminal of strategic importance: John Doe

Contact	Civic reg. number	Face - book	Childhood friends	Accomplice	Visited jail	Company	Telephone contacts	Total	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Hans Gunnarsson	19640607						112	14	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x
Pierre Hansson	197070305						63	10	x	x	x			x	x					x
Dragomir Petrovic	19691002						8	9	x	x	x			x						x
Richard Granblomma	19660406						2	8		x	x									
Gene Marklund	19680525						31	7		x	x	x						x		
Ulf Hagenstrål	19640302						17	7			x	x						x	x	
Alexander Bjovic	19710828						7	6	x	x				x						x
Johan Larsson	19590304							6		x			x	x					x	x
Dan Weber	197070106						7	6					x	x						x
Peder Ericsson	19611214							5		x			x					x		x
Serel Burz	19670303						8	4		x			x							x
Francisco Gap	19641201						34	3					x					x	x	
Mats Åke Osterlund	19650525						9	3		x				x						
Mirko Lehto	19700515						6	2		x				x						
Göran Slot	19710906						51	2												x

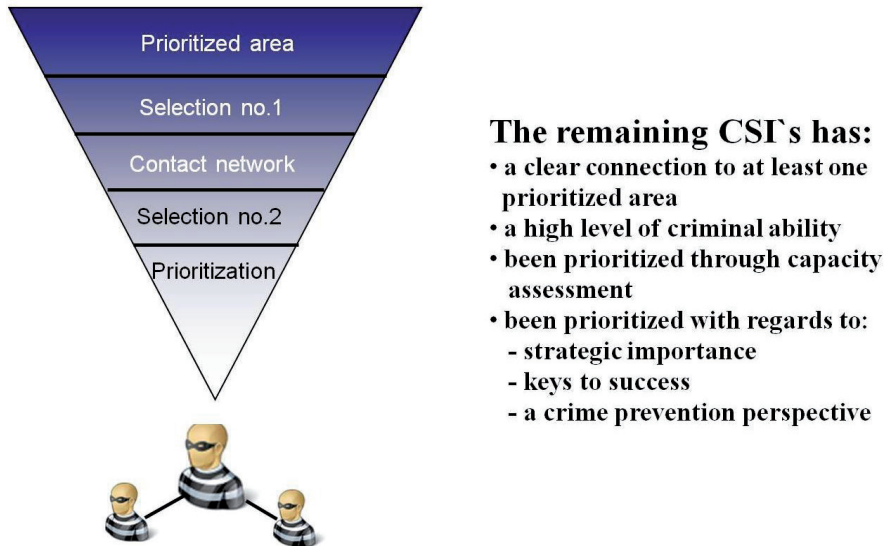
### Part 2. Qualitative information

### Part 1. Timeline regarding the duration of the acquaintance

Source: Andreas Gärdlund, Fredrik Mattsson, Kim Nilvall, Slide 8, Criminal Cooperation The Criminal Arborist Approach (CAP), March 29, 2011.

When Step 3 has been concluded the analyst often wants to return to Step 1 and repeat the process more carefully for CSIs who are still on the intelligence radar.

**Fig. 4 Prioritization between CSIs**



Cooperation The Criminal Arborist Approach (CAP), March 29, 2011

#### Step 4

Intelligence has now provided solid information on the criminal landscape and the capacity of Criminally Strategic Persons to allow for investigators to prioritize among the different CSIs. Investigators prioritize cases based on an evaluation of three criteria:

- *The strategic importance of the perpetrator:* The police are targeting individuals whose conviction will affect the most criminals – those that have many people in their inner circle and/or who serves as bridges between different criminal constellations.
- *Success factors:* What is the probability that the investigation will result in a conviction? Are there already ongoing investigations targeting the perpetrator or persons in his inner circle? Are informants already in place in the environment of the targeted perpetrators?

- *Positive effects on crime prevention:* Will a successful conviction have any positive effect on crime prevention? Could it disable criminal role models or show that crime does not pay off?

#### Step 5

In the fifth and last step, intelligence evaluates the lessons learned from the investigations. Information gained through the analysis can be sorted into the personal analysis documents and saved for future use.

#### **Further Use of the Criminal Arborist Perspective**

A coherent application of the criminal arborist perspective in order to get a better understanding of the criminal world will give the police knowledge of who are more likely to accept recruitment as informants. The police can also use their informants more efficiently.

The criminal arborist perspective is useful in the domestic environment in which law enforcement agencies possess information about the criminal environment to some extent. It can also be used at the international level when transnational crime is mapped and confronted. Bridge builders between organized criminal groups in different countries can be identified in order for law enforcement to clarify the international linkages

Further, intelligence using the criminal arborist perspective can help customs service trace the source of illegal shipments instead of just catching the traffickers, who might be very far out on the tree.

#### **The Baltic Joint Investigation Team**

In their pursuit to prevent organized crime have (over the last two decades), law enforcement agencies of EU member states have increased information exchange involving more uniform legislation, establishment of agencies such as Europol and numerous common strategies and coordination efforts. Nevertheless, organized crime is still on the rise. At the workshop, Walter Kegö, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Security and Development Policy, presented a new working method for taking on this challenge.

## Changing Conditions

While the Cold War era marred with negative associations among the general public, it is also a period that may evoke nostalgic feelings among some senior law enforcement and customs officers. This period was characterized by a strict control of national borders and full governmental control over societal spheres. Criminals mainly operated within the borders of their home countries. Furthermore, criminals had few international contacts and almost no state (Italy was an exception) experienced infiltration by shady elements. However, as “the new Europe” emerged after the fall of the Iron Curtain, conditions for criminal operations underwent a major transformation. The nature of modern-day organized crime has changed considerably due to the changes that globalization has created.

This is notable in the European context, where the possibility of free movement within the EU and the gradual withdrawal of state leverage upon societal spheres have enabled organized criminal groups to expand their activities. In addition to this, the structures of contemporary criminal networks have evolved from pyramid-shaped hierarchies to networks of cells where almost every unit operates independently. Criminal networks are made up of evolving constellations and bases of operations. The decentralized network makes it be easy to refill voids that emerge when network elements are eliminated. Considering that crime was much easier to control in the past, Cold War nostalgia among some senior law enforcement and customs officers is easy to understand.

The report *EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment* issued by Europol in 2009 outlines the structure of criminal networks in Europe. It suggests that organized crime in the “North East hub” (i.e. the Baltic Sea Region) is orchestrated predominantly by criminal groups originating from the former Soviet Union. The report identifies these networks as facilitators of the illegal transportation of prostitutes, pirated goods, and precursors to synthetic drugs and heroin from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The main logistic centers are Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg from where transnational activities bound for Europe are launched. According to the report, organized criminal groups originating from Latvia and Lithuania are the linkages to the rest of the EU.

## **Challenges Ahead**

International and supranational approaches have played a significant role in preventing the activities of transnational organized criminals. However, these approaches have not stopped organized crime groups from expanding their activities and, consequently, generating more profit. In the context of preventing transnational crime, regional approaches have been neglected to a large extent but could become very effective. International law enforcement needs radical innovations in order to keep pace with organized criminal networks.

One of the major challenges facing law enforcement agencies in fighting transnational crime is the requirement of efficient exchange of information. However, exchange of information is impeded by three factors. First, each country is sovereign in the application of its national laws. Therefore, each state border becomes a major obstacle to compulsory measures from other states. Second, international legal aid procedures, which, for example, include requests for extradition, handing over penal procedures to foreign countries, or issuing a warrant of arrest, do not come without problems. These procedures are often bureaucratic and time-consuming. Third, the lack of trust between law enforcement agencies and officers is a major impediment to the exchange of (often sensitive) information.

## **The Solution: A Baltic Joint Investigation Team**

In order to improve on the fight against transnational organized crime, improvements in the exchange of information, level of trust, and coordination are needed. A Baltic Joint Investigation Team, consisting of co-localized police, customs and intelligence officers and prosecutors from the respective countries could be the solution to the challenges presented above.

The rationale is forthright: there is an urgent need to enable crime fighters to begin simultaneous legal action in different countries, similar to the way organized crime operates. This implies accelerating the process of acquiring intelligence, issuing arrest and house warrants, conducting synchronized raids and launching investigations simultaneously in two or more countries. Prosecutors from a given country should be able to open a preliminary investigation in his or her country whenever reasonable suspicion is confirmed.

Currently, communication between law enforcement agencies in different countries is facilitated through telephone and e-mail communication. It is of paramount importance for people to meet face to face on a daily basis in order for trust to prevail. One of the benefits of the Baltic Joint Investigation Team lies in the advantage that comes with co-location.

A second advantage of the Baltic Joint Investigation Team lies in its ability to initiate actions in more than one country simultaneously. A surveillance staff in the respective countries opens up for jointly launched investigations, judicial processes, arrests and interrogations. Success will depend on the number of criminals prosecuted and not on the volume of information that is exchanged on a bilateral basis.

The Baltic Joint Investigation Team would not only constitute one body but rather a new working method, a twenty-first century strategy for fighting transnational crime. If successful, it could bring the concept of cooperation to a new and higher level. The idea should at least be tried for a few years. It could be dismissed if proven unsuccessful after the evaluation period.

### **International Police Cooperation**

Before the workshop ended, the participants were divided into groups to discuss common problems related to cooperation on transnational organized crime issues.

### **Differences in Working Culture and Definition of the Common Problem**

One major obstacle to improved cooperation is differences in work culture and understanding of what the common problem is. It can be exemplified by that the Lithuanian Police have had some problems in cooperating with its Norwegian counterpart in a case in which the Norwegians asked for help regarding criminal Lithuanian citizens operating in Norway. The Lithuanian police did not understand the problems faced by the Norwegians as the suspects did not openly commit crimes in Lithuania. The crimes committed in Norway were, from the Lithuanian point of view, not considered serious and hence were not prioritized. This example highlights the difficulties for international cooperation that originate in differences in working cultures and perceptions as to what constitutes organized crime. The same obstacles would probably face the Baltic Joint Investigation Team.



**Lack of Trust between Countries**

When law enforcement agencies cooperate to take on transnational organized crime, they often need to share sensitive information on ongoing cases. It is not uncommon that law enforcement agencies mistrust the capacity of their counterparts in other countries to handle information. Such mistrust impedes successful investigations of transnational organized crime.

The Swedish police have had liaison officers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that served the purpose of facilitating cooperation and intelligence sharing. One positive side effect of having liaison officers was that they promoted trust with domestic law enforcement agencies. Baltic police officers could put a face to the request for information. The importance of personal relationships as a measure for building trust cannot be emphasized enough. All of the workshop participants from Sweden regret the decision taken by the Swedish National Bureau of Investigation to withdraw its liaison officers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

**Lack of Information**

In some cases, law enforcement authorities lack knowledge about the characteristics of foreign organized crime groups operating in their countries. This knowledge should be exchanged between countries. Law enforcement agencies in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania could probably inform their Swedish counterparts about Russian-speaking organized criminal groups. In exchange Swedish Law enforcement agencies could tell about their experiences in working against criminal motorcycle gangs.

It can also be difficult for foreign law enforcement agencies to be fully updated on national legislation in neighboring countries, knowing what actions their counterparts are allowed to take and not to take. In Lithuania this problem is addressed through a guide on national legislation for international partners.

**Political Cost**

There are a number of political costs for governments in tackling organized crime abroad. It does not pay off in votes at home and governments are likely to see an increase in crime statistics. There is a risk that the law enforcement agencies and the public will be content with having their criminals



outside the national borders. Tackling organized crime abroad is likely to result in newcomers to the prisons at home. This might spark unrest within the domestic criminal community. To offset this incitement the government could allow law enforcement agencies to keep a percentage of the criminal assets seized.

Any law enforcement agency needs to maintain good relations with the government. If law enforcement agencies touches upon areas that are sensitive to those in power, the political elites are likely to strike back at the law enforcement agencies. In countries in which politics are mixed with the interest of criminals, efficient law enforcement is likely to be voided by political interests.

### **Suggestions for the Future**

The workshop gave the following suggestions for improving cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the Baltic Sea Region.

Law enforcement in the Baltic Sea Region would benefit from an agreement of common targets and methods for combating transnational organized crime. Intelligence could also be facilitated through increased cooperation between different countries. A tactical report, in which international connections between criminals in the region are described, should be worked out and handed over to units at the operational level.

This could be achieved either through a Baltic Joint Investigation Team or similar initiative, or through measures taken at the national level. Another idea, similar to the Baltic Joint Investigation Team, is to establish an intelligence center in the region in which liaison officers from different countries sit together and exchange operative information; meet with prosecutors; and have strategic discussion about ongoing cases. The value of such trust-building mechanism of liaison officers at such a center would be considerable.

When tackling drug-related criminality, the region would benefit from an increased cooperation and control over precursors for drug production.

