



DRUG POLICING BALKAN

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Introduction by Federal Minister of the Interior of Austria Mag.ª Johanna Mikl-Leitner

**Dear Madame or Sir,
Dear Colleague,**

Transborder challenges call for transborder actions. We will implement successful measures against international narcotic drug trafficking only if we join forces and work in close cooperation. To this end, we must all pull in the same direction, link up in the best possible way, and exchange experience and best practice.

During the last three years, the ISEC Project, "Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009 – 2012" turned out to be a success story of transnational cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking. This initiative was initiated by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with Germany, Bulgaria and Serbia, and the assistance of the EU Commission; its results are impressive.

With the most active assistance of EU Member States and in particular, of our Balkan state partners, we opened a new chapter of operational cooperation: In close coordination, our experts compared notes and thus brought a lot of offenders to justice who had been active in a transborder fashion. The numbers speak for themselves: In Austria alone, more than 750 persons were arrested, 60 of which sentenced to a total of 350 years of imprisonment. 400 kilograms of heroin, 105 kilograms of cocaine, and 52 kilograms of cannabis were seized in the process.

Transborder cooperation with our neighbouring countries has a palpable added value for Austria: If we strengthen security at our Western Balkan partners', we thus strengthen security at home. These days, criminals do not stop at any national border.

In conclusion, Austria is secure only if its neighbouring countries are secure, and people feel secure there. By the ISEC Project "Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009 – 2012" we made an important contribution to that end.

Johanna Mikl-Leitner
Austrian Minister of the Interior

Introduction by Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic



We are honoured by the fact that the Republic of Serbia constitutes part of the "ISEC Drug Policing Balkans 2009-2012" project that actually represents extension of the project AGIS Drug Policing Balkans 2006, in which the Republic of Serbia also took active participation.

According to various researches and assessments, the heroin market is dozens billion Euros worth. These are great sums of money that favour money laundering, corruption and bring about the weakening of legal economy. The criminal groups smuggling narcotic drugs are often involved in other forms of crime, such as white slave trade, smuggling, etc., they are very flexible and adapt their smuggling routes to the political, police and economic circumstances. All European police forces are well aware of the fact that the Balkans region is one of the main drugs smuggling routes, primarily heroin coming from Afghanistan that, according to the UN researches, produces almost 90% of the total production in the world.

Afghanistan is the top global centre of opium and heroin production, that are smuggled via the route encompassing Turkey, Bulgaria, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia towards the European Union countries- considered as the major global consumers of the Afghan heroin.

Serbia is geographically in the very heart of the Balkans, on the transit route between the Eastern and Western Europe and, by consequence, faces the problems posed by numerous international criminal groups and channels for smuggling narcotic drugs, primarily heroin. Being a transit country, Serbia is in a complex situation, considering that the shortest and most frequently used heroin smuggling route goes through its territory, from East towards West (the so called Balkan drug route). Heroin enters Serbia most often from Bulgaria, FYR of Macedonia, including the branch towards Kosovo and Metohija (K&M).

There are large quantities of heroin in K&M. It is smuggled therefrom to the Western Europe where, along with Turkish and Kurdish criminal groups, the Kosovo Albanians groups control the illegal heroin markets. The criminal groups are also active in Sandžak. Those groups members are usually persons with strong business or family connections in Turkey. Up to now, there were no information on heroin production in the Republic of Serbia. There are, however, operational information on heroin production in K&M, but that territory is not within the competence of the MoI of the Republic of Serbia, which represents a particular problem.

Major percentage of heroin taken into Serbia, including the quantities intended for trafficking in the West European countries, actually comes from the territory of K&M. The measures taken by the MoI of the Republic of Serbia related to cooperation with the UNMIK Police and Kosovo Police Service, through the Subcommittee for combatting organised crime and terrorism. The meetings held in Priština and Belgrade had no positive outcome. The information exchange was very poor, the checks took too long, which gave no efficient and concrete results in the cases concerned. This cooperation should have been the main basis for investigation into the criminal groups from K&M and their connections in Serbia regarding the issues of drugs smuggling. Without real and adequate cooperation with the competent authorities in K&M on this matter, the results cannot be expected, which directly concerns Western Europe, too. The reason therefore are the information that large heroin quantities come from that area, and the main actors in those activities have created very developed smuggling networks in many European countries.

These groups are formed on family and national grounds, which poses a particular problem.

Following illegal secession of K&M from Serbia, the heroin smuggling route from Turkey and Bulgaria, via the FYR of Macedonia and bypassing the territory of central Serbia, has become very attractive. The smuggling groups favour operating across the so called "Schengen borders" bypassing the territory of Serbia, because the Schengen borders are easier to cross. The result thereof is reduced number of seizures and seized heroin in the Republic of Serbia in 2009.

Modus operandi of the organised criminal groups from Serbia comprises heroin purchase in Turkey and Bulgaria, from the persons that are direct suppliers or connected with the producers. After that, the heroin transport to the territory of K&M or Novi Pazar is organised, wherefrom it is distributed in smaller quantities to known buyers in Western Europe, Scandinavia and Great Britain. The heroin is transported along the whole route in trucks, hidden in legal imported goods, parts of or spaces in passenger vehicles, especially equipped for narcotic drugs smuggling. Those groups are hierarchically organised, hermetic and very cautious. It is very hard to dismantle them, due to the fact that couriers or drivers, who are arrested in seizure actions, do not have information on the identity of the supplier or buyer. For the purpose of smooth movement of goods across the border crossing points, the customs officers are bribed. To trace the financial transactions flows, namely the payments made for purchasing narcotic drugs, is the hardest part. International narcotic drugs trafficking is a global problem that demands action by many countries.

"Narcotics Control in the Balkans" project initiated by the Ministry of the Interior of Austria is perceived by the Republic of Serbia as a concrete way to improve efficiency in combating international organised drug trafficking across the Balkans countries.

The project will be implemented, as we see it, through joint parallel operations (investigations) against identified targets, through improvement and enhancement of communications, exchange of operational data and information.

Ivica Dacic
Minister of the Interior
of the Republic of Serbia



parallel investigations, controlled deliveries, exchange of information and expertise, thus achieving very good results.

Our experience in international police cooperation provides enough grounds to believe that initiatives such as the project Drug Policing Balkan are of exceptional benefit. They afford opportunities to share best practices in combating drug trafficking and criminal structures involved in it, to assess the existing cooperation in the field, and to outline possibilities for its future strengthening and enhancement.

The main advantage of the project is the possibility for direct contacts on expert level between EU member states, third countries and international organisations, which significantly improves interaction and information exchange in real time,

Introduction by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria Tsvetan Tsvetanov

Bulgaria highly appreciates the opportunity to host the first conference of a series of conferences on the project Drug Policing Balkan, related to the international cooperation in combating drug trafficking. The need to counter effectively this type of crime and the desire to contribute for the regional stability, and thence – for the common European area of justice, freedom and security, are among the main motives for our active participation in the project.

The issue related to manufacturing, distribution, trafficking and abuse of drugs in recent years has become a problem of world-wide importance and presents one of the serious threats for the global security of the 21st century. The transnational nature of the problem calls for the joint efforts of all institutions engaged in it on national, regional and international level. Undoubtedly, solving problems related to abuse and distribution of drugs cannot be the responsibility of a single country. Joint efforts on part of the whole international community are needed to overcome these problems. By consolidating our efforts, we will be able to turn detached activities of individual countries into a collective effort, which will contribute to the international fight against drugs and organised crime.

Bulgaria, as an EU external border, is situated in a strategic geographical region and is crossed by important

roads, connecting Europe to Asia. Its territory is traversed by the so called "Balkan Route" of drugs. The Balkan route is used mainly for the illicit transfer of one of the most dangerous drugs, heroin. Drug trafficking is one of the most lucrative spheres of organised crime, along with trafficking in human beings, smuggling, economic crime and money laundering. In answer to the challenges, stemming from drug trafficking, during the past years Bulgaria undertook a variety of measures to set up an effective, result-oriented and consistent policy in this field.

The necessary legal and sub-legislative regulations to fight drug trafficking have been established.

A national strategy for combating drugs is being implemented, which marks the beginning of a hard, but extremely important transition, as result of which the joint efforts of separate ministries and agencies develop into strategic interaction. Systematic work is being done to strengthen the administrative capacity and to establish strategic coordination among all law-enforcement authorities.

Countering drug trafficking is a priority for the Bulgarian state also within the sphere of international police cooperation.

The Bulgarian law enforcement agencies implement all contemporary forms of police cooperation, including

planning of joint operations and setting up joint investigation teams.

I am convinced that Drug Policing Balkan will have important additional value towards full-fledged participation of all countries from the region in the international fight against drug trafficking.

It also fully corresponds to the priorities of the EU Drugs Action Plan (2009-2012), implementing the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012), by which the European model of international cooperation for reducing the negative consequences of drug abuse and limiting drug-related crime is established and affirmed.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the fact that the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, and in particular the Ministry of Interior, put in systematic and result-oriented efforts to counter actively serious and organised crime and to minimize opportunities for trafficking, distribution, manufacturing and trade in drugs. The efficient and mutually beneficial international cooperation with all partners involved is a guarantee for high results in this sphere.

Tsvetan Tsvetanov
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Interior
of the Republic of Bulgaria



Introduction by the former Minister of the Interior of Germany

Dr. Thomas de Maizière, Member of the German Parliament at project start in 2009

The Balkans region is still the most important transit area for smuggling heroin from Southwest Asia, in particular Afghanistan, via Turkey into Western Europe and thus also into Germany. In recent years, it has been noted that more and more cocaine is being transported in ship containers from South America to various sea-ports in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, and from there overland through the Balkans to Western Europe and Germany. In the opposite direction, that is from the Netherlands via Germany and the Balkans, an increasing amount of synthetic drugs are being smuggled towards Turkey.

In this situation, it is imperative to establish an efficient network of international co-operation for fighting drug-related crime on an international scale. Common security for Europe can only be achieved if we act in unison and share responsibilities. National

responses are insufficient in view the growing global crime challenge.

With this in mind, I consider the project „Drug Policing Balkans - Advanced 2009-2012“ an important landmark in achieving sustainable results when combating international narcotic crime on the Balkan route.

The approach which was chosen for the project, that is establishing a network of experts and holding experts' meetings on a regular basis with a view to initiate concerted investigations, has worked well during the previous project „Drug Policing Balkans“. Hence, it was logical to renew it for another three years so as to continue to promote the necessary co-operation between the countries.

The criminal activities of narcotic drug networks operating across borders are countered by the co-operation of all

law enforcement authorities at international level. Intensive police co-operation is a crucial factor in mobilising all potentials in the interests of fighting drug smuggling.

The political challenge is to set the framework conditions for enabling law enforcement services to guarantee internal security. To this end, we need encouragement and support in addition to motivation and equipment. Consequently, I am offering my support to all of you and I wish you and myself every success for achieving our common goals.

Dr. Thomas Maizière, MdB
Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany



Introduction by the Director of Europol Rob Wainwright

I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer some introductory remarks regarding this publication about the drug policing initiative in the Balkans.

The European Union (EU) is a significant global market for many types of illicit drugs including opiates and an estimated one hundred tonnes of heroin are needed each year to satisfy demand. Afghanistan is the source of virtually all the heroin encountered in the EU and trafficking routes can be traced across the Pakistan border, and also Iran, into Turkey for onward transportation to the lucrative drug markets of Western Europe. From Turkey, the Balkan routes remain the traditional and preferred channels into Europe, offering a network of countless smuggling possibilities through one or more of the Balkan countries.

There is a continual shift in patterns of transport routes along the Balkans for legal and illegal goods, reflecting

changes for example in societal, economic and infrastructure trends. There is also a steadily-increasing trend towards 'secondary distribution' along the Balkans, with more stockpiling of heroin in large depots. The ramifications of these activities to the EU in terms of heroin supply are significant and require a structured and cohesive operational response to disrupt and dismantle the criminal groups involved. Many of these groups are well established and have extensive associative links into EU-based criminal groups.

When the Drug Policing Balkan Initiative (Advanced 2009–2012) was conceived, it was to offer tangible financial and operational coordination support to law enforcement counter-narcotic operations in the Balkan region. This followed the Drug Policing Balkan programme initiated by the Austrian Presidency within the Council of the EU, with support from the European Commission in 2006. Heroin

trafficking interdiction operations were set up within the scope of the initiative and Europol then supported an analysis sub-project that helped lead to the arrest of prominent traffickers and the seizure of a large quantity of drugs.

As part of the programme of activities starting in March 2010, conferences will be held in Bulgaria, Austria and Serbia. Investigators and experts will meet to share information at an operational and legal level about drug trafficking along the Balkan route. Specific operational targeting will be explored and new operational activities will be agreed. Austria will steer the initiative, this time together with partners Bulgaria and Serbia.

Europol's Project Heroin team will be specifically involved in the Drug Policing Balkan Initiative by providing analytical support – collecting, analysing and developing intelligence – to assist Member States' investigations. It is envisaged the initiative will significantly improve operational communication among the participant countries and help increase the flow of heroin-related intelligence.

Having agreed a common operational strategy, parallel investigations will be carried out, supported by Europol, which will potentially lead to the formation of Joint Investigation Teams. During the course of the initiative, nine operational meetings will take place to coordinate joint investigations between affected countries looking to combat organised criminal groups operating along the Balkan route.

Europol is pleased to have the opportunity to support this important work and to provide its expertise, particularly in the fields of operational analysis and development of criminal data. With the Balkan route being a primary EU entry channel for heroin, it is therefore a priority target and Europol welcomes this further extension of the Drug Policing Balkan initiative.

We look forward once again to fruitful cooperation with our partners, leading to the disruption of key criminal groups operating in the region.

Rob Wainwright
Director of Europol



Introduction by Director of the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria General Franz Lang

**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear readers,**

The fight against narcotic crime is a fight which calls for concerted action, close international co-operation and a clear strategy. Otherwise, we will not be successful in getting drug trafficking under control. The three-year ISEC project "Drug Policing Balkans Advanced 2009 -2012" points the way ahead. It was initiated by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and the Criminal Intelligence Service and has the support of the European Commission. All actors playing crucial roles for the success of the project have been brought on board. Thus, we are setting a clear example of a common way in combating drug-related crime.

It is a particular pleasure for me to note the active participation and great acceptance of the project in the Western Balkan countries. Our partners on the Western Balkans are important for a successful outcome

of this ambitious project. In fact, the narcotic drugs that come from the Southeast are chiefly transported along what is called the Balkans route to be introduced to Europe, which makes it all the more important to set up a platform for concerted action involving all countries concerned. In recent years, the co-operation between the Criminal Intelligence Service and the Balkans countries has been excellent, not only in the field of narcotic crime, but also in the fields of organised facilitating of illegally immigration, burglary crime and organized motor vehicle theft.

I am firmly convinced that this renewed project will be equally successful. Austria is committed to share its narcotic crime expertise available from the Criminal Intelligence Service. Our country is not a producing country, but clearly a destination and transit country with major smuggling routes passing through our territory. In addition, the Vienna International Airport is used by many criminals for

drug smuggling attempts. Intensive checks could put a stop to such phenomena.

Those responsible are in most cases groups that are globally orientated and operate on an international level. The Balkans route is considered to be the major smuggling route from Asia to Europe. It runs through Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria with some diversions via Romania, Hungary, and partly the Czech Republic. The ferry connections between Turkey and Italy as well as between Albania and Italy are equally used for drug transports, and last but not least, we must not forget the piggyback traffic, which is used by smuggling groups for importing large quantities of heroin predominantly into Germany and the Netherlands.

Former Eastern bloc countries are typically used as deposit countries. Major consignments are transported from these depots to Western Europe with Austria being used for transit. For this purpose, the criminal networks recruit fellow citizens who have lived in the destination countries for a long time and have built up their own sales networks.

The ISEC project .. Drug Policing Balkans Advanced 2009 -2012 " is an opportunity for interlinking national intelligence even better, for reviewing existing strategies and for developing new models for the fight against the drug-related crime. I am convinced that our joint efforts in this respect will be successful.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who have made this project possible, in particular the European Commission and the participant countries. From a law-enforcement perspective, the benefits of such a co-operation are twofold: firstly, drug-related crime is directly controlled, and secondly, a considerable part of other crime categories are linked to activities involving illicit drugs. theft, receiving of stolen goods, robbery, prostitution, human trafficking, bodily injury, brawl and serious threats of violence. Consequently, fighting narcotic crime means fighting all other crime categories which considerably threaten the safety of our citizens.

General Franz Lang
Director of the Criminal Intelligence Service



History and

The kick-off of the Drug Policing Balkan project was launched at a high-level conference during the Austrian Presidency of the European Council in 2006, funded by EC – JLS/2005/AGIS/179.. It was attended by 24 EU member states, 5 candidate countries, 6 third countries and the international organisations Europol, Eurojust, EC, EMCDDA, Interpol and UNODC.

A three- stage plan has been established as a backbone for the initial project and the ensuing projects:

Primary activities:

- Establishing contact network along the Balkan route
- Conducting joint targeted operations and investigations
- Setting up Joint Investigation Teams (JIT)

The outcome of this conference contributed to enhancing cross-border control of the international organised drug crime on the Balkans.



Conferences



The participants in this conference laid the basis for a series of follow-up projects having a sustainable benefit



The jointly prepared conclusions have led the way for successful follow-up projects:

Conclusions

- In order to improve the intelligence sharing, Austria will compile a register of national experts dealing with heroin related crime. This information will be disseminated to participating countries, which will update the information as necessary.
- The participating experts recommended that joint training sessions should be held periodically for the national experts.
- The participating experts agreed to enhance the use of existing national and international analysis, information and index systems, providing possibilities for common investigations.
- The participating experts agreed to promote concurrent

investigations in the same operational field using real-time communication.

- The possibility of sending case-specific seconded officers to reduce communication problems during common investigations was supplied.
- The participating experts recognised the advantage of setting up Joint Investigation Teams, in specific cases and took note of the ongoing work in this field.
- The participating experts welcomed the cooperation between the EU Member States, Europol and Eurojust, as well as candidate countries and affected third countries. However, the participants called for stronger efforts in order to increase existing cooperation in fighting drug trafficking through the Balkans, within the existing legal framework.

The Follow-up Conferences

Follow-up conference in 2007 in Pörtschach, Austria

Conclusions

- In order to improve the intelligence sharing, Austria will compile a register of national experts dealing with heroin related crime. This information will be disseminated to participating countries, which will update the information as necessary.
- The group recommends that joint training sessions should be held periodical for the national experts.
- The group agreed to enhance the use of existing national and international analysis systems (for example E.I.S, AWF) to find contact points, providing possibilities for joint investigations. The participating countries

agreed to promote concurrent investigations in the same operational field using real-time communication.

- The possibility of sending case-specific liaison officers to reduce communication problems during joint investigations was supplied.
- The group recognised the advantage of setting up Joint Investigation Teams and took note of the ongoing work in this field.
- The group welcomed the cooperation between the EU Member States, Europol and Eurojust, as well as candidate countries and affected third countries. However, the participants called for stronger efforts in order to increase existing cooperation in fighting drugs from the Balkan region.



Follow-up conference in 2008 in Zadar, Croatia

Conclusions

- Ways of communication - All participant countries shall take into consideration experimental use of presented way of communication (Microsoft Office Groove) for sharing and exchanging police data's. All participant countries shall report Austria on their opinion until 1st. December 2008.
- Austria sub-project – The group install a focal point and all the members of the group

will send their information to this point. Bulgaria will host this focal point and they will send all their information's to Europol. Europol will start a new sub group in the AWF Mustard. They will analyse the information's and will send the results back to Bulgaria and the other members.

- Croatia sub-project – establishing operation HISTRI. In the first phase all participants, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, DEA, Germany and Slovak Republic will start collecting and sharing case information with other participants. In the second phase Croatia

will write initial starting documents and proposal beginning of joint investigation operation.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina sub-project - participants Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and DEA will collect and share information about the particular case. Bosnia and Herzegovina will send concrete request to other participants for further steps in sub-project.
- Serbia sub-project – agreed that all participants, Slovenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and DEA will start collecting and sharing case information with other participants

Luxembourg sub-project – agreed that all participants, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Romania will start collecting and then sharing case information with other participants

- Continuation of the "Drug Policing Balkan" project - The project "Drug Policing Balkan" will be supported furthermore by Bulgaria. Therefore Bulgaria is principally willing – also having in mind the Bulgarian engagement in the "Forum Salzburg Group" – to host the next conference "Drug Policing Balkan".



Project Description

The Austrian Ministry of Interior, Criminal Intelligence Service carries out together with the partner countries Germany, Bulgaria and Serbia a 3 year lasting project combating organised drug crime along the Balkan Route.

- Joint target operations and investigations
- To set up Joint Investigation Teams (JIT)

instruct the different organisational units of the countries in a uniform strategy. The additional benefit of this project will be the operational joint investigations targeting to smash criminal groups and seizure of illegal drugs.

The Balkan Route with its ramifications is considered to be the main transport route for the heroin manufactured in Afghanistan as well as its precursor substance opium. Every year up to 90% of the opiates and heroin seized in Europe have been illegally imported via these routes. To be able to disrupt the complex and solid structures, which international organised drug trafficking offers, stringent measures and perseverance in their application are required.

Project implementing mechanism

The project will be implemented through two different mechanisms:

Mechanism 1

3 Conferences (2010; 2011; 2012)

In the framework of these conferences (approx. 88 participants), which will be held in Bulgaria, Austria and Serbia, investigators and experts (from 27 EU MS, 3 candidate countries, Western Balkans (WB), Ukraine, USA, Europol, Eurojust, Interpol, EMCDDA, UNODC, EC) will meet to share information on operational and legal level concerning drug trafficking along the Balkan Route. In respect to the current drug situation specialised topics will be worked out and discussed in various workshops during the conference. The results of these conferences will be the basis for further joint investigations of the partner countries in cooperation with the Balkan countries concerned.

Through the involvement of the countries along the Balkan Route (RS, ME, AL, KS, FYROM) the relevant countries in this topic will be reached

Mechanism 2

9 Operational Meetings to form joint investigation teams

Within the project there will be held up to 9 operational meetings. Those meetings are demand driven (according to actual developments and threats) and aim to coordinate joint investigations of affected countries (EU MS+WB) to combat organised criminal groups operating along the Balkan Route. Those operational meetings will attend up to 15 investigators (from countries concerned incl. EUROPOL+EUROJUST)

It is the objective of this project to

Output should be to improve the communication among the several countries and organisations, to share information and in respect to the operational activities to arrest criminals.

Key Data - Participants

27 EU member states

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia

3 candidate countries

Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey

Western Balkan countries

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia

Further affected third countries

Switzerland, Ukraine, USA,

International Organisations

Europol, Eurojust, Interpol, EMCDDA, UNODC and EC (a total of 88 participants).

Key Data - Conferences and operational coordination meetings

Conference I: (Bulgaria) 2010
Conference II: (Austria) 2011
Conference III: (Serbia) 2012

9 operational coordination meetings along the Balkan Route; preparation of operational actions

***This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.**

Kick off meeting

Was held on 14th of October 2009 in Vienna

Principal objective / Philosophy

To enhance effectiveness in combating international organised drug trafficking along the Balkan countries

- To „perforate“ the most important trading route of Afghanistan used for illegal drug transport
- To weaken the logistics network „Kosovo“

Improvement in the combat of drug crime along the Balkan Route, that is:

- To enhance operational cooperation
- To improve communications as well as data and information exchange

Continuation of philosophy of “The 3-Stage Plan“

- Constant update of contact information

Responsibilities Contact Persons

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The Project Drug Advanc



Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009 - 2012

CONFERENCES



**1 Conference
Sofia
Bulgaria
14th to 16th
April 2010**

SEITE 17



**Hotel Festa
Bulgaria, Sofia 1404
83 Bulgaria blvd.**



Conclusions of the working groups

1. General working group

2. Germany - sub project Romania, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Italy and Germany

Topic: criminal groups from Kosovo and the region: The group agreed that there are several criminal groups active in this region. A lot of cases are directly or indirectly linked to this region. The situation about heroin trafficking is still the same as during the last years and this is different to the cocaine situation. There are more and more investigations where groups are linked to cocaine smuggling. More and more cocaine was seized during the last year.

There is a new ongoing project from DEA. The background of this project is collecting information's from this region with Informants. DEA has a budget to pay informants. If someone wants to use this project he is warmly welcome to contact DEA Office in Vienna or Rom.

Criminal groups use more and more Skype for communication and there are no possibilities to tape this calls. The group agreed that it is necessary to find possibilities to tape Skype. If some countries will get possibilities, they will share this information within the group.

The background of this investigation was a seizure about 34 Kg of heroin and arrest of one German citizen. The participants of the workshop agreed to the following proceeding:

FYROM will check the information from Germany and they will report the outcome to Germany. FYROM will try to identify "Semo" and "Enic" who are eventually responsible for the transport of the 34 Kg of heroin and they will also check the hotels in Skopje and the garage where the car of one target had been repaired. Italy remarked that the two Italian phone numbers are subjects of investigations in Italy and they will send a detailed report to Germany. Germany will provide Romania with additional information.



3. Bulgaria 1 – sub project Greece, Spain, Turkey, Netherlands, Italy

Bulgaria presented the OP. "ORIENT EKSPRESS", concerning recognized Nigerian citizen – organizer of drug trafficking. The group is based in Thessalonica. All countries from this working group agreed to check their databases on the main targets and they will share the information to all participants. For exchange of information with Italy, they will use the Italian Liaison officer in Turkey. The group also agreed that Bulgaria will send a rogatory letter to the Netherlands to start investigations there. If it is necessary cooperation with TNP is possible.

4. Bulgaria 2 – sub project Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Czech Republic and Spain

Bulgaria presented a new case about two brothers who smuggle Heroin from Turkey to Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Austria, Germany and Spain. All countries from this working group agreed to check their databases on the

main target and also the subscriber of the telephone numbers. Spain also agreed to conduct physical surveillance. The working group decided that the first step in each investigation would be to gather information related to the main target and their associates contacts. All countries will also try to find out his whereabouts. After gathering enough information countries can start investigations against this criminal group.

5. Austria – sub project Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, Spain, Kosovo Police, Germany, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Interpol

Austria presented a case about a big criminal group. Most of the targets are ethnical Albanians. The group is active in the above mentioned countries. There are seizures of heroin and cocaine in different countries. Main targets live in Austria, Belgium, Albania and Kosovo. The problem for the Austrian police is that a part of the group lives in Austria, but their criminal activities are not in Austria. They are responsible to transport

drugs from Albania to the Nordic countries and from Belgium and the Netherlands to Italy and Germany. Albania sent information to Austria and the Netherlands. Later on Albania did not give any other information. Austria got the information that the main target is a target in the project "Besa" as well and therefore Albania is not allowed to give more information about their investigation. Austria will ask Interpol official about further information about the project Besa. Later on Austria will inform all participating countries about the answer from Interpol and Austria will tell the group how they can share information with the project "Besa"

6. Albania – sub project Albania, Greece and Turkey

Albania presented a case about a small criminal group which has connections to the above mentioned countries. This group is trafficking Heroin from Turkey mainly to Greece and maybe to other European countries. According to the information from the Albanians, the trafficking route transits from Turkey, via Bulgaria, FYROM and Albania to Greece. Greece and Turkey agreed to crosscheck their databases as well as analyze the targets' entrance and exits records and other useful information regarding this criminal group.



Chronology of operational meetings

Successes showing lasting benefits



From left to right : General Franz Lang, General Director for Public Security in FYROM Ljupco Todorovski and Colonel Michael Mimra

value of € 3 million from Kosovo to Austria and further on to Italy, Switzerland and Norway between July 2009 and January 2010.

1 Croatian national and 3 Austrian nationals were arrested in Austria. Another 7 Austrian nationals and a Kosovar by birth were reported at liberty.

2nd operational meeting from 15 to 16 June 2010

Main subject of this working session was a FYROMn group of offenders acting on international level. Prior to the meeting, investigations were carried out in Austria and Germany during several months.

The leaders of the group of offenders in question are in FYROM and apply a strict hierarchy; the transport of high amounts of heroin to Belgium and the Netherlands is organised in FYROM. In these countries are staying potential members of this group of offenders and there are also several depots for storing narcotic drugs. From here heroin is smuggled in small amounts (1.5 kg) to Frankfurt and Vienna. The heroin is brought to the consumers through distribution networks led by persons in FYROM.

The participating countries - FYROM, Belgium, Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, and Austria - obtained the following essential information:

Frankfurt/Germany - heroin trafficking has totally been in the hands of FYROMn groups of offenders since 2 years. The modus operandi applied in Frankfurt/Germany more and more may also be seen in other European cities.

Vienna/Austria - during the last 3 years, offenders coming from FYROM have been apprehended and arrested in possession of larger amounts of heroin. At about 230 wire-tappings led to the arrest of 16 potential offenders and the seizure of 8.2 kg of heroin. The groups of offenders coming from FYROM alone sell at least 1 kg of

Background and basic position of the project

First of all extensive investigations were initiated in Austria against a Kosovo group of offenders for international heroin trafficking.

Arrangements for and execution of numerous heroin transports were linked to this group of offenders.

For example, in Norway 10 kg of heroin were seized and 2 suspects were arrested. In the course of this seizure further persons were arrested in Austria. In Austria 7.3 kg of heroin were seized and 3 suspects were arrested. 6 further heroin transports were traced to them. In Slovenia another suspect was arrested and 10 kg of heroin were seized. In this connection another suspect was arrested in Croatia. Furthermore, urgent suspicion has arisen that a further seizure (10 kg of heroin in Norway and arrest of a suspect)

can also be linked to this group of offenders. The group of offenders acts from Kosovo and via middlemen recruits drug couriers in Austria who transport heroin from Kosovo via Austria to practically all of Europe.

1st operational meeting – 8 to 9 March 2010

This work meeting was to serve coordination of available intelligence as to the group of offenders in Kosovo. In particular, intelligence had to be forwarded to the competent authorities in Kosovo in order to initiate investigations in Kosovo against wirepuller and organizers accordingly. To this meeting informed representatives from Slovenia, Croatia, Norway and Kosovo were invited from Austria.

Complete success of 1 operational meeting

Location and arrest of members of a smuggling gang acting on international level. This group of offenders is suspected of having smuggled in a vehicle during several trips a total of 48 kg of heroin having a black market

heroin per day in the streets of Vienna/ Austria. This corresponds to a daily turnover amounting to € 50,000.- and an annual turnover of € 18,250,000.-.

Results of the 2nd operational meeting

After a confirmation given by FYROM that also there the group of offenders in question is active, a meeting with EUROJUST shall be initiated in coordination with prosecutors from Germany and Austria and the possible creation of Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) shall be considered.

3rd operational meeting on 25 October 2010

Representatives from judicial and police authorities of FYROM, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, as well as Eurojust discussed further operational measures.

Investigations initiated in FYROM against one of the principal offenders already led to first successes, whereby a delivery of heroin could be

intercepted in Germany. The heroin is transported on lorries from Turkey to the Netherlands and from there it is distributed. Comprehensive international investigations revealed a series of incriminating facts leading to the arrest of members of the group of offenders in question.

Results of the 3rd operational meeting

It is planned to take action against this group of offenders in December 2010. Information gathered from wire-tappings in Austria are seen as very important for a successful indictment.

Thus, FYROM plans to send an expert to Vienna, who shall filter out from the records of more than 800 phone numbers the information being relevant for the current proceedings.

It is considered to initiate further investigations in the Netherlands, since the main camp of the group of offenders allegedly is located in the Rotterdam area.

4th operational meeting from 29 November to 4 December 2010

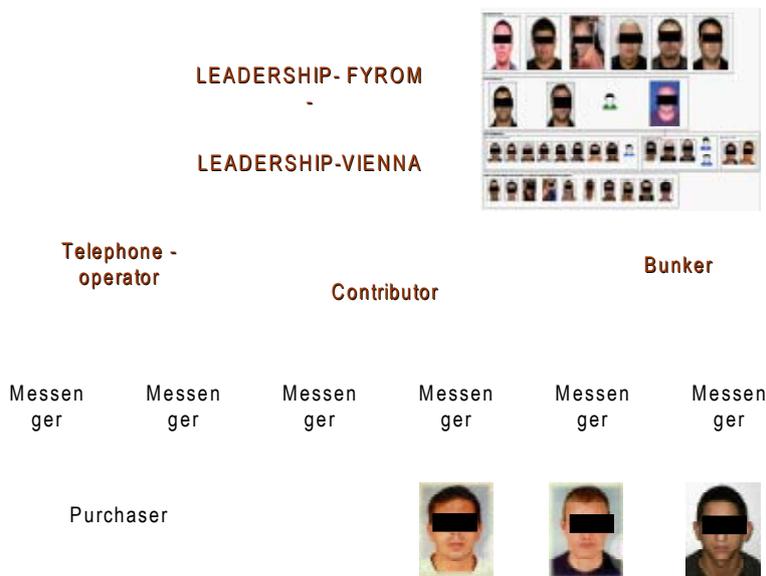
The sending of an officer from FYROM to Vienna/Austria planned during the 3rd operational meeting in order to examine relevant wire-tapping records is carried out.

Results of the 4th operational meeting

Completion of the preservation of evidence against the group of offenders in question through evaluation of the call data. In the following, a total of 98 persons are arrested – which constitutes a resounding success of the ISEC project „Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009-2012“!

Sustained success has been achieved also in Frankfurt/Germany. More than 140 kg heroin have been seized, more than 300 suspects have been arrested. Several 100 kg extender and more than € 100.000,- have been seized.

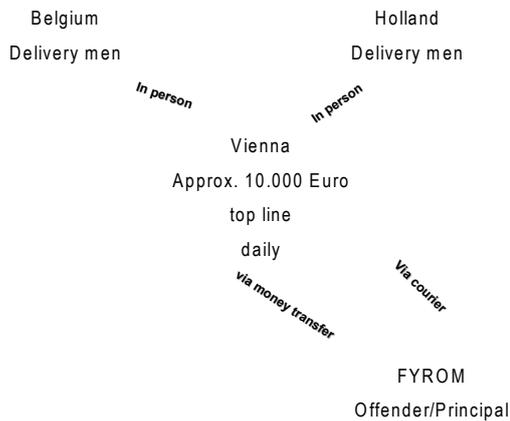
Structures of criminal grouping have been detected and battered



Ways of heroin delivery



Ways of money transfer



„Austria played an important part in the smashing of these groups of offenders”, explained Ljupco Todorovski, General Director for Public Security in FYROM. He thanked Austria for the excellent cooperation, without which the arrests would not have been possible.

The arrested persons are accused of having distributed high amounts of high-quality heroin all over Europe. „Within a very short time, they had taken over heroin trafficking in Vienna”, explained Colonel Michael Mimra of the CID Vienna.

In Vienna, within the framework of the Operation „Dirigent” 69 persons have been arrested since the initiation of investigations in November 2009. In Germany, more than 300 persons have been arrested and more than 170 kg of heroin have been seized since starting the investigations in 2007. In Frankfurt, FYROM groups of offenders took over the whole heroin market.

International arrest warrants were issued against five persons. Among them are the two presumed principal offenders having been arrested in FYROM. They are charged with drug trafficking and money laundering and are suspected of having organised a network of mediators and street vendors of heroin in Frankfurt and Vienna. Moreover, persons stemming from FYROM were recruited for selling narcotic drugs in Vienna and Frankfurt. The wire-pullers in FYROM coordinated the drug trafficking by calling the mediators staying in Vienna and Frankfurt.

The group of offenders offered heroin of very good quality (up to 60 percent purity). The heroin was then cut and sold with a purity of 30 to 40 percent to middlemen; these further cut the drugs and then sold them in the streets. The price per gram of heroin amounted to 30 to 40 Euro.

During the arrests in FYROM the Austrian liaison officer in FYROM as well as officers of the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria and the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) Wiesbaden were present.

Investigations of the CID Vienna started in 2009. In Austria, investigations against the two groups of offenders started in November 2009; they have been part of the EU-funded ISEC project „Policing

Extract from the Website of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior dated 23 December 2010

Criminal Intelligence Service Austria

Operation „Dirigent“: 29 arrests in FYROM, in total 69 arrests in Vienna. Two principal offenders arrested in FYROM during a large-scale police action.

Thanks to the excellent cross-border cooperation between the FYROM, German and Austrian authorities, in the framework of a coordinated action on 22 December 2010 in several FYROM cities (Skopje, Veles, Sveti

Nikole, and Gevgelija) it was possible to smash a criminal organisation having organised the traffic in heroin in Vienna, Frankfurt and many other European countries.

On 22 December 2010, during a large-scale police action in FYROM 29 persons were arrested, among them the presumed principal offenders.

„The Operation ‚Dirigent’ constitutes one of the largest strikes against the organised drug-related crime in Europe”, explained General Franz Lang, director of the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria, on 23 December 2010 in Vienna. „I would like to thank the FYROM General Director for the excellent cooperation. The police in FYROM acted in an exemplary manner and had an important part in stopping heroin trafficking in Europe”, said Lang.

Balkan" that was started by Austria's Minister of the Interior, Ms. Maria Fekter. Despite the fact that in Austria and in other countries many persons were arrested, it was not possible to stop heroin trafficking. Therefore, the international investigations aimed at the arrest of the principal offenders. In Austria, the actions were coordinated by the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria. „The police operation on 22 December 2010 in FYROM, carried out based on an excellent cooperation with FYROM and Germany, made the strike against the group possible", explained Lang. „The operation is a classic example of international cooperation. Without the support of the FYROM police this success would not have been possible", said Lang and thanked the FYROM General Director for Public Security, Mr. Ljupco Todorovski.

In June 2010, in Wiesbaden (Germany) a conference was held during which further investigations were coordinated between Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and FYROM. In mid-July 2010, there was another meeting at Eurojust. In October 2010, the investigations concentrated on FYROM, which finally led to the arrest of 29 persons on 22 December 2010. Among the arrested persons were also the principal offenders, who were also circulated as wanted by Austria based on an international arrest warrant.

In Austria, up to now 26.3 kg of heroin and 38.5 kg of cutting agents were seized. 67 persons were committed to the Regional Court of Vienna, many of them were sentenced to several years of imprisonment (all of them of FYROM origin) and five further international arrest warrants were issued.

Working method of the groups of offenders
The groups of offenders had a very good structure. Successes of the police by seizures or arrests immediately were compensated for. This means arrested persons were immediately replaced by other persons.

For example: On 4 September 2010, 3.2 kg of heroin were seized and two persons were arrested in Vienna. The group was newly structured that very same night. On 6 September 2010, the wire-pullers in FYROM already notified that new men will come to Vienna.

Apart from investigations carried out by the CID (Landeskriminalamt) Ast

Mitte, special measures were carried out by the task force Vienna (EGS Wien), which also led to the arrest of several street vendors.

The smashing of the group of offenders was only possible because of the intensive cooperation of all participating organisations. In particular the cooperation with the judicial authorities was essential to the success. „In this respect the cooperation with FYROM has to be emphasized in particular. It was only possible to finally smash the group of offenders in FYROM by intensifying this cooperation. Therefore, we were able to prevent that more and more FYROM nationals take over drug trafficking in Austria", explained Lang.

5th operational meeting from 5 to 6 April 2011

The aim was to coordinate the cooperation between Serbian and Austrian undercover agents to dismantle a international operating criminal group.

Results of the 5th operational meeting

Third-largest cocaine seizure in Austria
Since several months, comprehensive investigations have been carried out against a Croatian group of offenders which transported high amounts of cocaine from the Caribbean to Europe. After close cooperation between the police forces in Austria, Germany, Croatia, and Slovenia the Austrian police officers were in the position to arrest two suspects and seize 105 kg of cocaine on Tuesday, 12 April 2011. This was the third-largest seizure of cocaine in Austria.

The main task of the Croatian group of offenders was to organise the transportation of cocaine from the Dominican Republic to Europe and to hand over the illegal drugs to

purchasers in Europe. The cocaine originates from Columbia and was brought to the Dominican Republic by Colombian groups. The narcotic drugs were transported from the Dominican Republic to Europe in planes rented in the Caribbean and the Bahamas. Then, the cocaine was brought to Europe via several stop-overs.

Effective combating of drug trafficking along the Balkan countries

Based on the latest information available in Croatia the structures built within the framework of the project „Drug Policing Balkan – Advanced 2009 to 2012" were used and investigations were initiated also in Austria and Germany. This case shows a very good functioning of these structures and how quickly they are able to react to respective requirements. Within the framework of this project, drug trafficking along the Balkan route was treated for the first time also in connection with smuggling of cocaine.

Four suitcases containing 105 kilograms of cocaine

On 12 April 2011, the plane loaded with cocaine landed on the airport in Stuttgart. Officers of the German Bundeskriminalamt in Wiesbaden conducted a surveillance of the suspects who drove to Austria in two vehicles; in Austria, the Austrian surveillance units took over. In the Austrian Province of Carinthia one of the two vehicles was stopped by the police, the two passengers were arrested and the cocaine contained in four suitcases was seized. The two arrested persons were unarmed and did not put up resistance. The arrested persons were a 35-year-old man, the organiser of the criminal group, and a 34-year-old woman, both having dual nationality (Croatian and Canadian). The second vehicle was stopped in Slovenia and the passengers were also arrested, another accomplice was arrested by the police in Croatia.



Press conference Zagreb (18 April 2011)
Jürgen Stock (Vice president of Bundeskriminalamt Germany), Dinko Cvitan (Director of Agency to fight corruption and organised crime in Croatia), Oliver Grbi (Police Director in Kroatien), Franz Lang (Director of Bundeskriminalamt Austria) and Jure Ferme (Director of Bundeskriminalamt Slovenia)

The Project Drug



Policing Balkan 2 Conference

**Altenmarkt/Zauchensee
Austria**



**25th to 27th
May 2011**

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Conclusions of the working groups



1. General working group – cocaine smuggling

The group agrees that there are several criminal groups operating in that region and many cases are directly or indirectly linked to it. An increasing number of investigations deal with criminal organizations from the Balkan region (so called Balkan cartels) that are involved in cocaine smuggling. An increasing quantity of cocaine was seized during the last year and some big international investigations yielded good results.

Cases with foreign connections should be shared with all countries involved and the latter should initiate investigations without delay.

2. Luxemburg, Luxemburg, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, Austria

Luxemburg holds information about a criminal group which is involved in drug smuggling and money laundering. Luxemburg has passed on all important intelligence to the other countries concerned and the latter will analyze it and provide Luxemburg with additional findings.

3. Albania, Albania, Switzerland, Italy, Kosovo and Greece

Albania presents information about a criminal group who smuggles large quantities of cannabis from the Balkans region to Western Europe. Albania has shared all intelligence with the other countries involved. The investigation in Albania is still ongoing and the other countries will examine the possibility of initiating investigations.



Wolfgang Oegel, Federal Criminal Police Office Wiesbaden/Germany
 Christian Mader, Ministry of Interior Austria –Criminal Intelligence Service
 Dr. Franz Ruf, Security Director of the province of Salzburg/Austria
 Mag. Gerhard Stadler, Ministry of Interior Austria –Criminal Intelligence Service
 Fani Pandezova, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria
 Ivan Brandic, Ministry of Interior of Serbia – Service for Combating Organized Crime

4. Germany and Austria Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Czech Republic

Investigations are in progress in Germany, Austria and Bulgaria and pertinent information was shared with the other countries. They related to criminal organisations from Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which transport large quantities heroin from Turkey to Western Europe, especially to the Netherlands and to Switzerland. They have specialized groups which are responsible for cutting the heroin and to sell it in the streets. These groups from Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have brought the heroin market in Vienna (A) and Frankfurt (D)

under their control and are preparing to do the same in several other cities all over Europe.

Since the start of these investigations, 45 kgs of heroin were seized in Austria alone and more than 150 target persons were arrested.

The group agrees to a closer co-operation and to starting investigations also in other countries.

5. Kosovo Kosovo, Austria, Germany

Last year's working group in Sofia (BG) reported that Kosovo has supplied information on their most recent findings. So far, no links to other countries have surfaced. The group agrees to immediately starting investigations if links to Western Europe should surface.

6. Serbia Serbia, Austria

Serbia provides information on a criminal group which transports heroin from Serbia to Austria and Western Europe. The Austrian authorities were provided with relevant telephone numbers. The contact persons in Austria have not been identified yet. Austria agrees to immediately start investigations against this criminal group. Serbia will provide all intelligence directly to the Austrian investigation team.

Chronology of operational meetings

Successes and long-term benefits



6th operational meeting on 4th and 5th May 2011:

The aim was to co-ordinate investigations conducted in different European countries against Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia offender groups on the basis of intelligence from the operation „conductor“. Investigative results from telephone surveillances in Austria, Germany, Belgium and Bulgaria were assessed. Intelligence relating to Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Netherlands was edited and forwarded to these countries for criminal prosecution measures to be instituted.

7th operational meeting:

for technical reasons it was held prior to the 6th operational meeting, namely between 21st and 29th of April 2011. The aim was, similarly to the 5th operational meeting, to plan and co-ordinate an undercover operation. Undercover investigations were conducted and assessed on a regular basis. The investigative results were an essential contribution to the 6th operational meeting.

Further strategic discussions took place in working parties during the „Drug Policing Balkan Advanced

2009-2012“ Conference in Altenmark/ Zauchensee (A) between 25th and 27th of May, which drew on intelligence from the operation „conductor“ and on the analyses of the operational meetings 6 and 7.

- Result – arrests and seizures
Serbian offenders were arrested and 1,724 grams of heroin, 21 kgs of cutting substances, EUR 37,830 cash as well as weapons and ammunition were seized.



THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS OF „DRUG POLICING BALKAN ADVANCED 2009- 2012“

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE 3-Stage Plan

- Establishment of a contact network along the Balkans route
- Joint targeted operations and investigations
- Setting up of joint investigation teams (JIT)

Following this philosophy, a number of other investigations have been successfully completed since the success of the operation „Conductor“ in December 2010, as a result of investigations carried out in Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Serbia and Switzerland.

Austria

145 People have been arrested, 11 international warrants of arrests have been issued

45.4 kilograms of heroin seized
 EUR 172,965 cash have been seized
 76.7 kgs of cutting agents have been seized
 6 commercial burglaries solved (involving losses of more than EUR 600,000)
 26 Bank robberies solved

350 years' imprisonment



About 60 individuals have been convicted with final effect to date. The punishment for all of them exceeds 350 years' imprisonment!

Austria

(operational unit for street crime control – Vienna)
 114 individuals have been arrested and another 61 people interrogated
 10.04 kgs of heroin have been seized
 177 grams of cocaine have been seized
 EUR 141,565 have been seized

Austria

(Lower Austria Criminal Intelligence Service)

10 individuals have been arrested
 5.5 kgs of heroin have been seized



Slovenia

Burglaries at a commercial centre in Ljubljana, 3 burglars have been arrested



Switzerland

5 kgs of heroin and 500 grams of cocaine have been seized, one person has been arrested



8th operational meeting on 2nd and 3rd of August 2011

Discussions on strategies and preparatory work for dismantling criminal networks.

Bulgaria

Result – seizure of a large quantity of heroin
The 8th operational meetings led to the seizure of a total of 108 kgs of heroin in Bulgaria between 2nd and 4th of November 2011 .



9th operational meeting on 13th and 14th of September 2011

The aim was establishing the future strategic direction on the basis of the evaluation of new intelligence.

10th operational meeting on 28th and 29. November 2011

The aim was the clearing up the smuggling of drug precursor substances (ephedrine) from Serbia into Slovakia, where methamphetamine is produced in a yet unknown laboratory. Most of it is sold in Austria.

11th operational meeting on 19 and 20 December 2011

Further coordination measures were taken with regard to Operation SPASE and for another offender group. The links between the Serbian and FYROM offender groups were discussed in particular. Coordinated measures for the investigations in Slovenia and Serbia have been encouraged. Slovenia gave a presentation on the on-

going operational measures directed against SPASIC and others and on the links between the offender groups in the Netherlands. On the Serbian part intelligence originating from the surveillance measures was presented and they forwarded information on the trucks used to smuggle the goods. The Croatian participants presented their analysis results. Further investigation measures were agreed upon.

Another successful police operation against a group of offenders from Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Operation SPASE

Austrian investigation co-operation with Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia

Sweeping success of searches based on the closest possible co-operation with Serb executive authorities

- Arrest of 3 drug dealers of a Macedonian group of offenders
- Seizure of
 - 52 kg of herbal cannabis with a black market price of € 640,000.-
 - 2 kg of speed (amphetamine)
 - 6050 ecstasy tablets

After comprehensive investigations based on the information gained during the project „Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009-2012“, a 36 year old Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia lorry driver was arrested on 14 January 2012 in Gratkorn/Styria, who had smuggled 19 kg of herbal cannabis, 2 kg of speed and 6050 ecstasy tablets.



On 16 January 2012, another two persons were arrested. The lorry of the two Austrian nationals - 45 and 47 years of age - was stopped in St. Michael/Styria. As a result 33 grams of herbal cannabis were seized. The two lorries were stopped after hours of surveillance and a chase in the nightly snow flurry.

The three presumed drug dealers are members of an important Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia gang that has organised large-scale smuggling trips. They mainly smuggle heroin, yet the groups of offenders „help“ one another in case of shortage by smuggling also other narcotic drugs that are urgently needed.

It is estimated that about 150 gang members have been arrested in Europe since December 2009. Despite the fact that the group of offenders has suffered substantial losses because of the many arrests, it still acts very flexible. In case smuggled goods are seized, the next shipment is sent off by lorry on the very next day.



Success of cross-border investigations

Arrest of a heroin dealer of Macedonian origin and of his Bosnian supplier, seizure of 113 grs of heroin, 1602 grs of cutting agent and 970 Euro cash money

Polizeipräsidium Frankfurt am Main Kriminaldivision Zollfahrdienst	KI 60 AG Jade		Frankfurt/M. 05.11.2011
Täglicher Kriminalitätslagebericht			
Taktische Maßnahmen und Einsätze für die Zeit vom 05.11.2011 bis heute			
<u>Internationale Zusammenarbeit mit den mazedonischen Behörden, Einsatzkräfte von zwei mazedonischen Herkunftslandern</u>			



International co-operation with the authorities of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, arrest of two Macedonian heroin dealers

Polizeipräsidium Frankfurt am Main Kriminaldivision Zollfahrdienst	KI 60 AG Jade		Frankfurt/M. 21.10.2011
Täglicher Kriminalitätslagebericht			
Taktische Maßnahmen und Einsätze für die Zeit vom 19.10.2011 bis heute			
<u>Zweitägige Einsatzmaßnahmen erfolgreich abgeschlossen</u>			
<u>Festnahme von vier mazedonischen Heroinhändlern</u>			
<u>Sicherstellung von 1.000 g hochwertigem Heroin, 1.000 g Streckmittel und 4.400 Euro</u>			

Successful completion of two-day joint operational measures: Arrest of four Macedonian heroin dealers, seizure of 1,000 grs of high-quality heroin, 1,000 grs of cutting agent and 4,400 Euro.

Polizeipräsidium Frankfurt am Main Kriminaldivision Zollfahrdienst	KI 60 AG Jade		Frankfurt/M. 21.10.2011
Täglicher Kriminalitätslagebericht			
Taktische Maßnahmen und Einsätze für die Zeit vom 21.10.2011 bis heute			
<u>Einsatzkräfte eines mazedonischen Heroinhändlers und seines bosnischen Lieferanten, Sicherstellung von 113 g Kokain, 2013 g Heroin, 1500 g Streckmittel und 970 Euro Barggeld</u>			



**Press conference Vienna/
Austria, 28 March 2012**

„With our joint efforts we committed ourselves to combatting drug crime. To this effect we concentrate our efforts on those who profit from the internationally operating drug cartels“, stated the Austrian Minister for the Interior, Mrs. Johanna Mikl-Leitner in a joint press conference with the Serb Minister for the Interior Mr. Ivica Dacic. „More than any other form of crime drug crime is a transnational phenomenon marked by groups of offenders acting worldwide. In an extensive operation we succeeded in striking a significant blow against organized drug crime.“



From left to right: Ivica Dacic, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, Franz Lang, Milorad Veljovic

„DRUG POLICING BALKAN ADVANCED 2009- 2012“

Summary of successful performance as of 23 March 2012

Seizures

Cocaine	Heroin	Cannabis	Amphetamine
105,5 kg	351,7kg	52 kg	2 kg

XTC	Extender	Euro
6050 Stück	397,7 kg	452.360,--

Arrests
754

Term of imprisonment
350 years

Implementation of the last cornerstone of the 3-phase-plan philosophy

Based on ongoing investigations against international organised criminal groups Germany, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands and Austria decided to establish a joint investigation team.

The Project Drug Advanced



Belgrade/Serbia

Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2009 - 2012

3 Conference

9th to 11th
May 2012

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Conclusions of the working groups



From left to right : Franz Lang - Head of Criminal Intelligence Service/Austria, Kalin Georgiev - Secretary General/ Bulgaria, Herbert Anderl - General Director for Public Security/Austria, Milorad Veljovic - General Director of Police/ Serbia, Wolfgang Oegel - Deputy Head of subdivision on drug-related crime/Germany, Gerhard Stadler - Head of office 3.3 - Drug related crime/Austria

1. General working group

3 main questions

Experience with Balkan Syndicates (OC groups in the Balkan countries and operating from Balkan countries)

Problems with these groups in the countries

Need to start operational cases against these groups

All participants agreed that there are a lot of different OC groups. They either operate from the Balkans or the principal targets are located there. So called Balkan Cartels are very active in smuggling cocaine from South America to Europe. High ranking members of these groups are residing in different Balkan countries. Their criminal activities mostly take place

in other countries and only the money flows back to the Balkan countries. The groups are trafficking in all kinds of drugs (heroin, cocaine, synthetic drugs, etc.). According to the input from the participating Balkan countries a total of 10 important criminal groups are active in different countries in the Balkan region.

All European Union member states and all other participating countries have problems with criminal groups from the region. The big difference is that the groups are active in different countries. Italy has big problems with groups from Albania, in Austria Serbian and FYROM groups are very active. Switzerland, too, has big problems with Albanian groups. In the Czech Republic Albanian and Serbian groups are causing problems. Nordic

countries also have big problems with groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Serbian groups. All things considered, we agree that these groups are very active.

In order to fight these groups, a close cooperation between all countries involved is required. Criminal groups resort to a very good network and the police, too, have to cooperate very closely. It is not possible to destroy criminal groups with local investigations. Balkan countries should be included in all investigations. Balkan countries, in particular, should also be financially supported in order for them to be in the position to pursue this form of investigation (financial support for travel expenses, technical equipment, etc.).



Milorad Veljovic

2. Working group “Heroin and Marihuana” – proposal of Albania, Austria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Croatia

Topic: Investigations in Albania, Austria and Croatia pursued against a criminal group. This group is suspected of having transported big amounts of heroin and Marihuana from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania to Western Europe. Seizures in Croatia (500 Gramm heroin) and Albania (big amount of money) show that the group is very well organized. Sometimes couriers drive with heroin and Marihuana from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Greece in order to take ferries to Western Europe.

The main targets of the group are located in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and, therefore, it is very important that Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also starts with investigations pursued against these main targets.

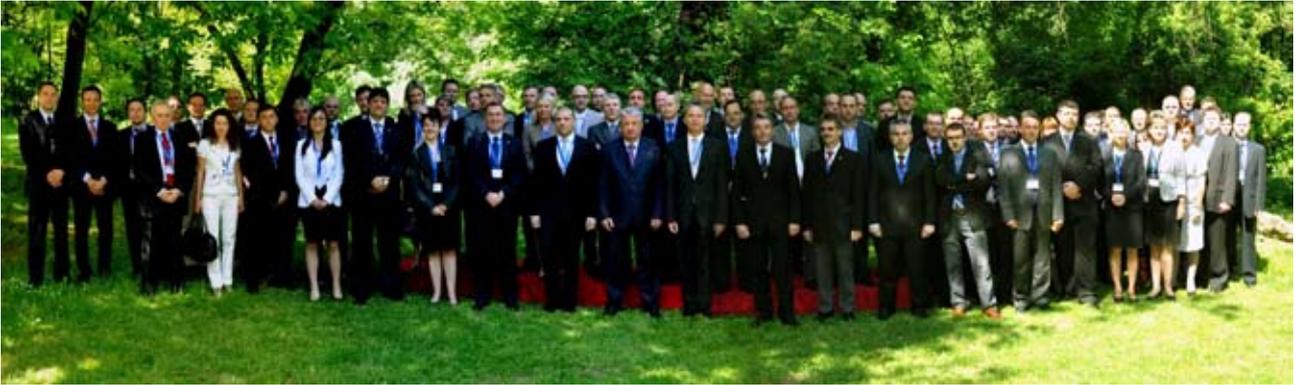
Conclusion: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will make some checks and they will see if they can initiate investigations. Greece will see if there are some important links to ongoing investigations and they will check the Greek phone numbers. Croatia, Albania and Austria will continue with their investigations.

3. Working group “Operation SPASE” – proposal of Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, The Netherlands, Europol

Austria gave a short update on the current investigations in the mentioned operation. They particularly pointed out the excellent participation of the authorities in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On that occasion the phone numbers of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were handed over, the surveillance of which has to be given priority. Due to the absence of the Eurojust representatives, the JIT between Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Eurojust, initiated by Austria within this project, was explained and the current status as regards the drawing up of the contract was presented. The Netherlands advised that they did not know of such a JIT in connection with Operation SPASE. The assignment of a Dutch investigation unit will be done by the Dutch judicial authority. All representatives, in particular the participants of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, confirmed that investigations would start in their respective countries as soon as the JIT contract was signed.

4. Working group “GASHI” – proposal of Austria, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia

Austria gave an update on the current status of investigations and pointed out that joint investigations seemed to be urgently required for the investigations that were mainly being pursued in Austria at the time. Slovenia indicated to have intelligence on GASHI and to share them with Austria and the other countries involved. Croatia suggested that GASHI would be frequently staying in the area of Umag and that he had relatives there. Also an urgent operational meeting of the assigned investigators of the countries involved would be necessary to be held in the area of UMAG, as the Umag and Rijeka police had highly interesting intelligence on the drug smuggling activities of GASHI. The Slovene and Croatian authorities promised to immediately initiate investigations. Existing intelligence was exchanged and will be exchanged in the framework of the project in the future.



Family Photo



From left to right: Franz Lang - Head of Criminal Intelligence Service/Austria, Kalin Georgiev - Secretary General/ Bulgaria, Milorad Veljovic - General Director of Police/Serbia, Herbert Anderl - General Director for Public Security/ Austria, Wolfgang Oegel - Deputy Head of subdivision on drug-related crime/Germany

Chronology of operational meetings Successes and long-term benefits

12th operational meeting on 30 and 31 January 2012

Coordination of further tactical measures taken in the "Operation SPASE". Subject matter were Serbian, Albanian, FYROM offender groups. Serbia informs on a new law about the pen register in force as of 15 February 2012. Measures to prepare the JIT contract are continued.

discussed. The CID intelligence on four suspects was compared in order to draw up another action plan. The Dutch authorities present (Research Centre Rotterdam) nominated, for the first time, the relevant Dutch institution for the implementation of the upcoming JIT contract.



15 operational meeting on 3 and 4 June 2012

Discussion of tactical measures for the Operation SPIDER to dismantle an offender group which organise, from Austria, extensive cocaine and heroin smuggling through the Balkans to Western Europe. Another operation plan was worked out. The representatives of the Romanian authorities agreed to urgently initiate investigations and to organise telephone surveillance. The direct exchange of information of police intelligence through the Austrian liaison officer of the Ministry of the Interior of Austria posted in Bucharest was agreed.



13th operational meeting on 17 April 2012

The setting up of the JIT contract is continued, exchange of information about suspects arrested in the course of the operation „Dirigent“ in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, fixing of the further flow of information, analysis of the drug trafficking in the respective countries, discussion of the multilateral cooperation concerning the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Austria and Germany. The FYROM judicial authorities nominated the competent public prosecutor's office which will meet the JIT requirements. It was confirmed that investigations would be initiated following the signing of the JIT contract. However, until the JIT contract has been signed, the relevant criminal intelligence has to be exchanged through the the liaison officers.

■ Result: Seizure of 40 kg heroin and arrest of 3 major offenders.

■ Result: Seizure of 111.6 g and 110 g heroin, 170 g methamphetamines, cash money amounting to € 5,800,- and 2 Electro – Pics (electronic rods to surmount the car electronic in order to open the vehicles) and seven persons were arrested in Vienna..

14th operational meeting on 29 and 30 May 2012

Missing documents needed for the signing of the JIT contract were

Donnerstag, 14. Juni 2012 Seite 13
Wienenerin (44) führte Schmuggel-Fahrt an • Drogen um zwei Millionen Euro aus dem Verkehr gezogen: Wagen mit 40 Kilo Heroin „vollgetankt“
 Vom Wert dieser Tankfüllungen können selbst Ökonomen nur träumen: Mit 84 Heroin-Paketen aus zwei Millionen € in präparierten Treibstofftanks wurden in Rumänien zwei Schmuggel-Autos gestoppt. Ziel: Österreich. Stunden-Chauffeur Nicole S. aus Wien und ihre Komplizen sind in Haft.
 Sechs Monate war man dem europaweit agierenden Drogenkartell bereits auf der Spur – Dienstagabend schlug die rumänische Sonderinheit auf der Autobahn A1 zwischen Ploesti und Bucharest zu. Im Vorbeifahren der Beamten: Zwei Luxuswagen, die aus der Türkei kommen.
 Die Schmuggler waren mit nicht weniger als 40 Kilogramm Heroin im Straßenverkaufspreis von mindestens zwei Millionen Euro zu uns unterwegs. Aufgetr
 Die österreichische Bundeskontrolle war im Zuge des Projektes „Drug Policing Balkan“ in diesem Fall federführend. Weitere Ermittlungen sind im Gange.
 auf dem Weg nach Österreich waren.
 Vormer war Fahr Nicole S. aus Wien, dicht gefolgt von einem Auto mit zwei Rumänen. Beides stoppt an einer
 Tankstelle dann der nächste Zettel. Das Drogen in den Fahrzeugen versteckt sind, war den Fahrern klar – doch mit einer Rechtsdurchstellung hatte niemand gerechnet.
 auf insgesamt 84 Pakete, versteckt in den präparierten Fahrzeug-Tanks. Auf 16 Kilo soll die 44-jährige Nicole S., die als Drehtischlerin der Drogenorganisation gilt – 24 kg Heroin transportier
 ten ihre rumänischen Komplizen. Non sitzt das Trio hinter Gittern.
 Laut Ermittlern nicht die erste Schmuggelfahrt der Bande, die das Heroin von der türkischen Suchtgif
 Mafia beug. Von über Wahlheimat Wien aus vertrieb die gebürtige Rumänin Nicole S. die Drogen in ganz Europa. Ihre österreichische Staatsbürgerschaft sollte als Tarnung dienen.
 Von der Observation auf der Autobahn über die Sicherstellung der Drogen bis zum Schnelltest vor Ort

16th operational Meeting on 30 May 2012

Tactical measures and preparation of undercover investigations. Exchange of information on Montenegrin and Turkish drug smugglers.

- Result: May 2012 – Kapshtica/ Albanien – Seizure of 21,2 kg Cannabis herbal



17th operational meeting on 12 and 13 June 2012

Briefing of the countries Croatia, Slovenia and Austria on the Operations SAR and GASHI and another principal suspect. The basis for this meeting was the 3rd Conference in Belgrade/ Serbia where the foundation was laid in the Working Group „GASHI“. The Slovenian and Croatian authorities promised to immediately initiate appropriate surveillance measures and CID investigations.

- Result: w/a were issued.



18th operational meeting from 16 to 17 July 2012

High-ranking operational meeting at the Ministry of the Interior of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia following excellent investigation results of the operation SPASE. Further measures were taken and preparations were made to finalize the JIT contract. The General Director for Public Security of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ljupco Todorovski, designated the responsible persons for carrying out of the agreement and endowed them with the required powers.

- Result: On 5 September 2012 the JIT contract „VINEYARD“ was signed by the judicial representatives of the contracting parties at Eurojust in The Hague.



Ljupco Todorovski - General Director for Public Security in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Background information on the Operation SPASE (excerpt from the FYROM media)

13-year term of imprisonment for the accused Spase XXX – nickname „Ajduk“ (47) from the „Frankfurt Mafia“

It is exactly three days before the end of the one-year deadline that the first instance sentences of the Court in Skopje against 29 persons accused for drug trafficking and money laundering were passed down.

In the end, XXX Spase was sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment for three offences. The sentence of his son Tome was only three years less while Zoran XXX (42) from Veles was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 11 years. Most of the other accused persons were sentenced to terms of imprisonment between 5 and 6 years.

The daughter of Spase, Barbara XXX (20), was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of two years suspended for four years. She accused the court of staging a fictitious case. They had allegedly been told their sentences already in December 2010 – on the same day they were arrested. A high-ranking police officer from the unit to fight organised crime allegedly told them already back then how the case would end, the whole procedure was a mere “waste of time”.

Yesterday, the first instance sentences were announced in a highly tense atmosphere. Both, the accused as well as their relatives were visibly nervous and there was also one incidence (Note: Insult of the relatives who were present and one smashed window).

At the end of 2010 the case „Dirigent“ became public and in June 2011 the public prosecutor’s office completed the indictment according to which the Frankfurt Mafia started the trafficking in heroin already in 2005. According to the charges of the public prosecutor’s office, these persons who were mainly inhabitants of the cities of Skopje and Veles, were accused of illegal drug trafficking, money laundering and illegal possession of weapons.

The smuggled heroin was destined mainly for the markets in Austria and Germany. The police there conducted large-scale operations in the course of which a great number of FYROM nationals were arrested and were then charged with having transported and sold heroin. (13 June 2012 – utrinski.com.mk)

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Тринаесет години затвор за „Ајдукот“ од „Франкфурт мафија“



Судот изрече високи затворски казни за 29 обвинети за трговија со дрога и перење пари
Љубиша Станковиќ

Photo: Petr STOJANOVSKI - Dayli newspaper of FYROM „Utrinski Vesnik“

Final stroke of a successful project

Signing of the JIT Contract
 „VINEYARD“
 on 5 September 2012 in The Hague



From left to right: Stefan Madl – public prosecutor Vienna / AUSTRIA, Vilma Ruskovska - public prosecutor Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Martin Links - public prosecutor Frankfurt / Germany, Ingrid Maschl-Clausen - National Member of Austria at EUROJUST

Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Investigation Team

In accordance with Article 19 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime of 15.11.2000, and, for The Netherlands and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with Article 20 of the Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters of 08.11.2001, and as for the relations between Germany, Austria and The Netherlands in accordance with Article 13 of the Convention of 29.05.2000 on mutual assistance in criminal matters between the Member States of the European Union.

Notes

DRUG POLICING BALKAN