

Illegal Killing, Trapping and Trade in Wild Birds and the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT)

State of Play
May 14th

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AP ENVICRIME





Agenda

SOCTA

AP EnviCrime

Operational Actions and Support



EMPACT

crime areas & priorities 2022-2025

High-risk criminal networks

Cyber-attacks

Trafficking in human beings

Child sexual exploitation

Migrant smuggling

Drugs trafficking

Organised property crime

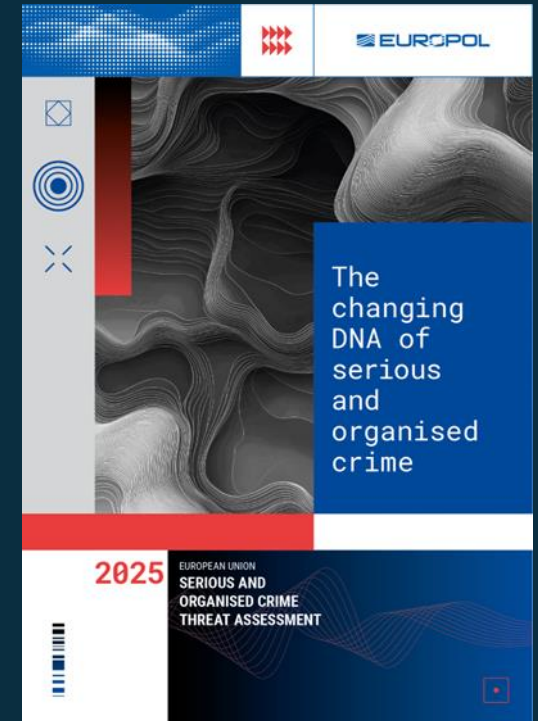
Fraud, economic and financial crimes

Environmental Crime

Firearms trafficking

SOCTA

- The DNA of organised crime is changing. **Organised crime is not decreasing - it is increasing. It moves through the digital highways, infiltrates our economies and institutions. It adapts faster than ever before.**
- Crime is becoming more **destabilising**. It corrodes the political, economic, and social structures that hold our societies together. It generates illicit money that fuels violence and extends corruption.
- Organised crime is no longer just about money. There is a growing collaboration between criminal networks and actors orchestrating hybrid threats, exploiting geopolitical tensions, and undermining our institutions.
- Crime is increasingly **nurtured online**. The digital environment has become an enabler, countermeasure and target (for instance, theft of data and digital assets) for organised crime.
- **Crime is accelerated** by AI and emerging technologies.



SOCTA

Key findings for wildlife trafficking

Threat: Stable market – variety in traded species

Wildlife traffickers trade in a variety of endangered and protected species, turning increasingly to non-CITES listed specimens in order to avoid attention from law enforcement.

The EU is a source, destination and transit hub for endemic wildlife trafficking

Future evolution: Potential shift in illicitly traded species and growing online trade

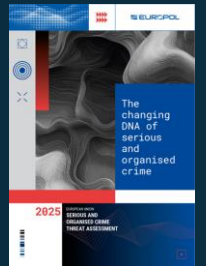
With changing consumer demands, traffickers may resort to the illicit trade of lesser-known species or products with high commercial value.

The use of ecommerce and social commerce will take further prominence as a marketplace for wildlife.

Impact: Harm to the entire ecosystem

Wildlife trafficking directly harms entire ecosystems, including human health

The illicit removal and trafficking of flora contribute to climate change.



ESOC

AP Envicrime

EUROPOL



Crime areas

- Terrorism
- Organised crime
- Drug trafficking
- Money-laundering activities
- Crime connected with nuclear and radioactive substances
- Immigrant smuggling
- Trafficking in human beings
- Motor vehicle crime
- Murder and grievous bodily injury
- Illicit trade in human organs and tissue
- Kidnapping, illegal restraint and hostage-taking
- Racism and xenophobia
- Robbery and aggravated theft
- Illicit trafficking in cultural goods, including antiquities and works of art
- Swindling and fraud
- Crime against the financial interests of the Union
- Insider dealing and financial market manipulation
- Racketeering and extortion
- Counterfeiting and product piracy
- Forgery of administrative documents and trafficking therein
- Forgery of money and means of payment
- Computer crime
- Corruption
- Illicit trafficking in arms, ammunition and explosives
- **Illicit trafficking in endangered animal species**
- Illicit trafficking in endangered plant species and varieties
- Environmental crime, including ship-source pollution
- Illicit trafficking in hormonal substances and other growth promoters
- Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, including child abuse material and solicitation of children for sexual purposes
- Genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

AP EnviCrime



1

Effective and agile **operational support** to the EU Member States' investigations

2

Criminal intelligence **analysis**, provision of specific **expertise**, **deployments** in the field, real time **information exchange**

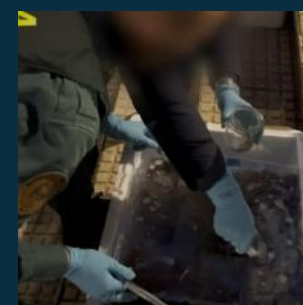
AP EnviCrime

Environmental crime is a serious criminal offence that includes a diverse range of criminal activities. AP EnviCrime was **created in November 2017** and its opening order was amended in 2022.

Waste and pollution crimes include illicit waste production, trafficking and disposal, trafficking of ozone depleting substances (ODS) and hydrofluorocarbons (F-gases), fuel frauds, illegal shipbreaking, illegal use of pesticides, illegal oils blending and trafficking of mercury.



Wildlife crimes include poaching, illegal poisoning and trafficking of exotic and endemic fauna and flora (both CITES and non-CITES listed), animals mistreatment and welfare, bio-crime (intentional spread of zoonosis), illegal logging and timber trade, forest fires and deforestation, and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) activities.



TOOLBOX

Data Exchange



Data Analysis



Operational Meeting



Support on the spot



Financial Support



Travel Intelligence



Operational meetings

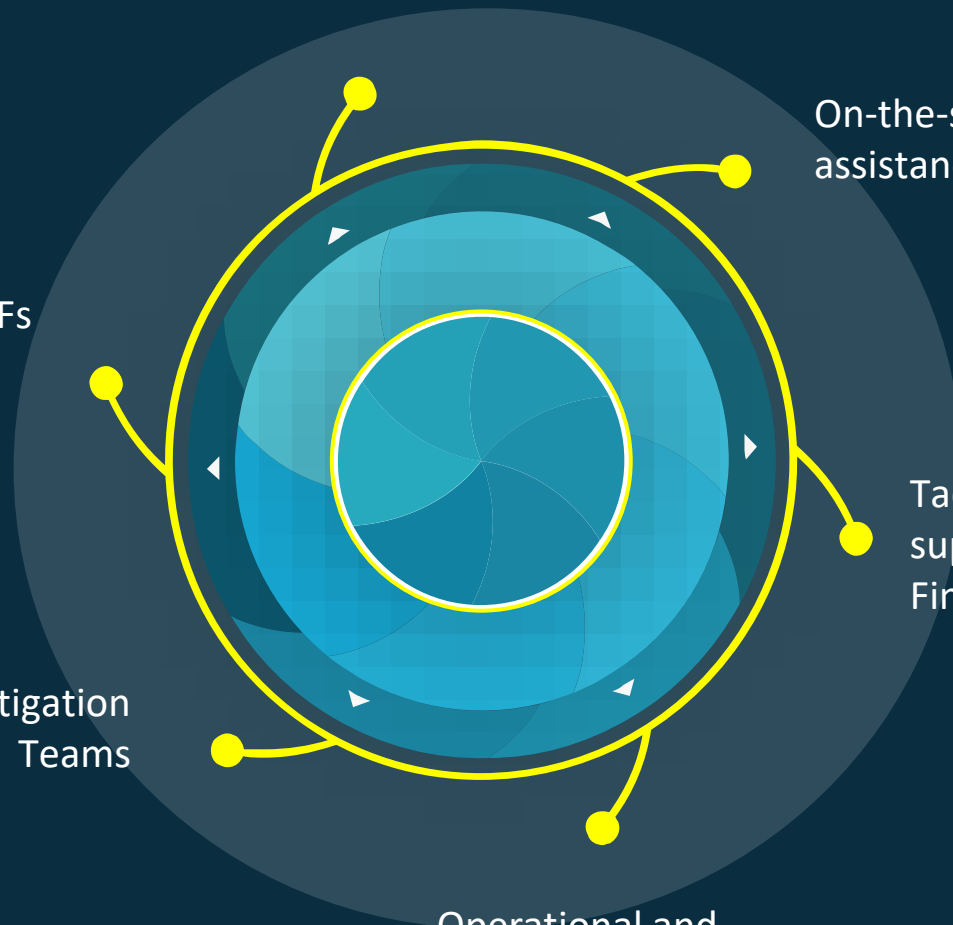
On-the-spot assistance

HVTs & OTFs

Tactical, Technical support and Financial support

Joint Investigation Teams

Operational and strategic analysis



Data Exchange



Data Analysis



Operational Meeting



Support on the spot



Financial Support



Travel Intelligence

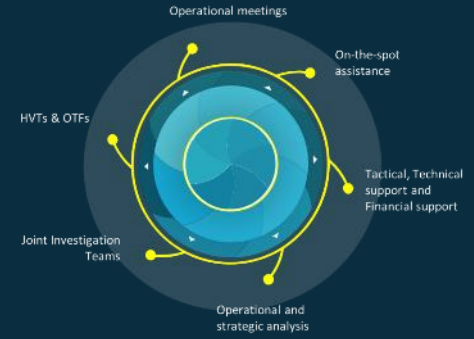


VCP

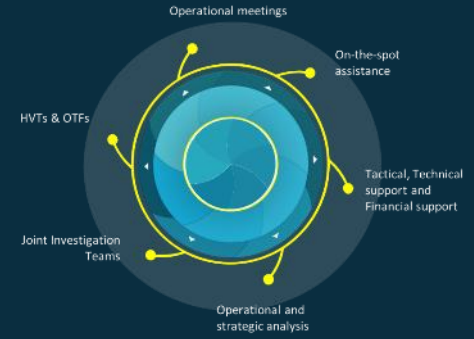
Virtual Command Post

- Managing and coordinating operations
 - Real-time monitoring;
 - File transfer;
 - Video streaming;
 - Audio streaming;
 - Tracking capabilities, namely location, reaction time, movement speed;
 - Instant messaging;

History and reporting.



Data Analysis



Data Exchange



Data Analysis



Operational Meeting



Support on the spot



Financial Support

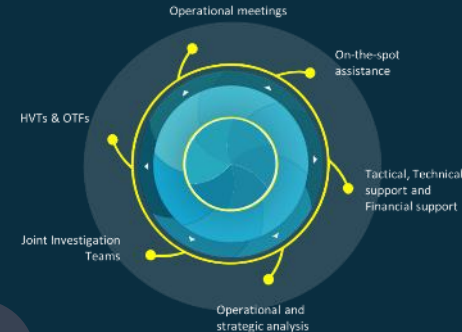


Travel Intelligence

- Hit Notification
- Cross-Match-Report
- Analysis report
 - e.g. Encrypted/ Big-data/ Radio Cell/ Timeline/ Geospatial

Principle:
The more detailed information, the better the Analysis product

Operational Support



Data Exchange



Data Analysis



Operational Meeting



Support on the spot



Financial Support



Travel Intelligence



- Common approach of at least 2 member states required
- Before the request get in contact with concerned Analysis Project at EUROPOL or Liaison Bureau



- Analyst/ Specialist can be requested
- Mobile Office
 - Virtual Extension of Europol Network
 - Access to all Europol databases
 - Real time checking of data
 - Speed and accuracy





Data Exchange



Data Analysis



Operational Meeting



Support on the spot



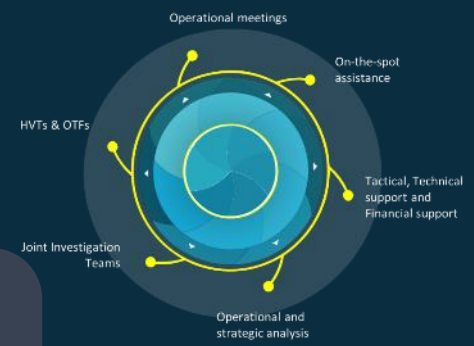
Financial Support



Travel Intelligence

Financial Support

- Operational Meetings
- OTF-Grant
- EMPACT Low Value



Travel Intelligence

- Connected to PIUs and other relevant authorities
- Identify suspicious traveler/ dangerous individuals
- Travel histories
- Co-travelers
- Travel pattern based on intelligence



Concrete & HVT Criminal Investigations



OTF

OPERATIONAL TASK FORCES



Temporary group of representatives of Member States (Third Parties) and **Europol**

Objective: enable coordinated, expanded and EU wide investigations targeting **individuals (HVT)** that constitute the **highest** serious and organized crime risk for Member States and Third Parties.

Extensive
resources

Long-lasting
commitment

Plan based
approach

Technical and
financial support



Operational Actions

SUPPORT



Birds Trafficking

8 bird traffickers netting €1 million per year arrested in Spain
The Spanish Civil Guard's Environment Protection Service (Guardia Civil - SEPRONA), together with the Portuguese Republican National Guard and the Moroccan Royal Guard have arrested with the support of Europol 28 bird traffickers in a crackdown on an illegal wildlife smuggling business netting €1 million per year.



280 exotic birds were recovered, valued at over one million euros, among which featured macaws, parrots and cockatoos, all of which are endangered species protected by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). These birds were destined to be sold to North African countries – Morocco in particular, where the demand for them is high.

Codenamed 'ORATIX', this operation took place earlier this year in February and March in the Spanish cities of Malaga, Murcia, Granada, Alicante and Asturias.

Birds Trafficking



Over 50 protected birds destined to be traded on the illegal market rescued in Italy

- Rollers, hawfinches, jackdaws, goldfinches and serins were among the birds rescued
- Authorities identified a criminal group involved in collecting nests and protected birds in central Italy to later sell them on the illegal market
- This is a new trend in wildlife crime
- Law enforcement has observed a growing demand for rare birds on the black market

In an investigation led by the Carabinieri from the CITES Group, and supported by Europol, two suspects involved in poaching and trafficking of endangered species of birds have been identified and prosecuted in Italy. They were involved in collecting nests and protected birds in the central region of Lazio to later sell them on the illegal market, mostly to clients in northern European countries (the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium).

Birds Trafficking

Illegal trade in endangered species: 29 arrests and over 2,000 animals seized in international Operation SUKAZU



The Spanish Guardia Civil, with the support of Europol and in close cooperation with Mexico, has carried out Operation SUZAKU, resulting in 29 arrests in Spain and in other countries. All of the arrestees have been charged with crimes of smuggling, wildlife crime and animal abuses, as well as being part of a criminal infrastructure.

The organised crime group controlled a network of operators, who were transporting birds of a large variety of species to Spain from different places in Africa and Latin America by using mules. International collaboration has taken place with police authorities and other bodies from 18 different countries.

Conclusions

- ❑ Despite an **increase in cross-border environmental crime investigations, focus is more on single incidents rather than organised crime activities**, it is challenging to link cases to organised crime activities
- ❑ Limited number of EU Member States allocate sufficient resources and expertise to investigate environmental crimes
- ❑ Considering the scale of the threat, **information exchange between MS/TP and Europol is not sufficient**
- ❑ Need to **centralise / coordinate the expertise** – different actors play a role in EnviCrime: Police, Customs, Inspectorates with investigations powers, etc.,
- ❑ Demand for Europol's services is growing and becoming more complex

Thank you for your
attention

Any
questions?

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