Regional cooperation for combating illicit trade in SEE through SELEC

International Conference

Illicit Trade of tobacco products along the Balkan Route

18 October, 2019
Sofia, Bulgaria
Southeast European Law Enforcement Center

• International law enforcement organization

• Cooperation platform for the Police and Customs authorities

• established in 2011

• successor of SECI Center (founded in 1999)
To provide support for the Member States and enhance cooperation in preventing and combating trans-border serious and organized crime.
MEMBER STATES

- REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
- HELLENIC REPUBLIC
- HUNGARY
- REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
- MONTENEGRO
- REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA
- ROMANIA
- REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
- REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
Operational Partner Status:

- exchange personal data
- participate in operational activities
- post representative at SELEC HQ

Interpol
Italian Republic
United States of America
SELEC PARTNERS

Observer Status:
• receive strategic information
• participate in SELEC’s different meetings, trainings and seminars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Japan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>Belarus</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES

• EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
• REGIONAL OPERATIONS
• JOINT INVESTIGATIONS
• OPERATIONAL MEETINGS
• ANALYTICAL SUPPORT
SELEC TASK FORCES

- Mirage - countering THB and smuggling of migrants
- Anti-Drug Trafficking
- Financial and Computer Crime
- Environment and Nature Related Crimes
- Stolen Vehicles
- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling
- Anti-Terrorism
- Container Security

Not for public dissemination
The National Units - established by the Member States to implement the SELEC Convention

NATIONAL UNITS

Liaison Officers

National Focal Points

Not for public dissemination
INFORMATION FLOW
INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Exchange of information

- 11320 (2011)
- 16722 (2012)
- 14654 (2013)
- 23222 (2014)
- 23802 (2015)
- 23967 (2016)
- 26463 (2017)
- 27172 (2018)
Joint Investigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Operation ECLIPSE III - combating illegal trade with a focus on smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco related products. Results:

- 41.5 million cigarettes seized, 557 kg of raw tobacco, 362 kg of water-pipe tobacco and 354 kg of smoking tobacco

Operation KNOW-HOW III - targeting detection and confinement of counterfeit goods entering Southeast Europe:

- Estimated value of seized goods - 9,647,000 EUR
Operational Focus

Real-time information exchange
Intelligence-led joint investigations
Support for operations

- EU and non-EU countries
- Posted LO/Network of NFPs
- Secure communication network
- Analytical capabilities
- Training facilities
- Operational Centre Unit (in 2019)
- Prosecutors involved (SEEPAG)
2019 Report on the situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling in Southeast Europe

Not for public dissemination
METHODOLOGY

THE REPORT IS MAINLY BASED ON:

- **Annual Questionnaires** for Southeast Europe tobacco products smuggling situation report over the period January-December 2018, provided by 10 SELEC Member States

- **Seizure notifications** for 2018

- **Previous SELEC Annual Reports** for a comparative analysis

*Not for public dissemination*
CIGARETTES SEIZURES

- Close to 1.5 billion cigarettes seized
- 41% drop compared to level recorded in 2017 (2.5 billion)

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**Total amount of seized cigarettes in Southeast Europe 2015 - 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seized Cigarettes (in millions)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,331,921,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,858,084,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2,505,503,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,487,127,949</td>
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</table>
2019 Report on the situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling
- Conclusions -

- Cigarettes smuggling remains a great threat in our region and it helps fuel other transnational crimes.

- The itineraries inside Southeast Europe are dynamic, and most of the countries in our region represent transit areas towards other markets.

- The dynamic of illicit tobacco market has changed, with less contraband of the major international producers; most cases of seized cigarettes in the region consist of cheap-whites and even counterfeits of cheap-whites.

- Online trade has seen an increase over the last couple of years. Surface web and the Darknet has become an important tool for criminals all over the world, representing an important facilitator in illicit goods smuggling.
Organized Crime Threat Assessment
OCTA SEE 2018

• 2 versions: restricted and public
A strategic report identifying and assessing the threats faced by the SELEC Member States, the assessment covers relevant aspects occurred during the past five years (2013 – 2017), provides valuable facts to the stakeholders and law enforcement bodies in general. OCTA SEE intends to cast more light on the understanding of crime in the region.
TARGET: counterfeit goods

TIMEFRAME: from 12th to the 23rd of March 2018

PARTICIPATION: all Member States

2,180 exchanges of information

Estimated value: 9,647,000 EUR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>Number of seizures</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>12,965,380 (pieces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessories</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52,122 (pieces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>33,106 (pieces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicines</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32,394 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25,069 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22,978 (pieces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco products</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20,538 kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6,258 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5,850 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto spare parts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,197 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed clothes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,827 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phones and equipment for mobile phones</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,811 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food products</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>761 (pieces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household items</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>163 kg</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Project: FAIT - Fight Against Illegal Trade

Objective 1
• Setting up SELEC Operational Centre Unit (OCU) in order to increase the operational capacity of the LEAs against illegal trade

Objective 2
• Training for specialists on the latest technology, special techniques and special investigative methods for better results in the fight against smuggling of goods (VR)

Objective 3
• Social-media awareness campaign against smuggling activities
THANK YOU

Valentin NICULESCU
Director for Operations