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)
SELEC MISSION

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Japan</th>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>Belarus</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
INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Exchange of information

11320, 16722, 14654, 23222, 23802, 23967, 26463, 27172
JOINT INVESTIGATIONS

Joint Investigations

60  69  58  70  89  101  108  109
Operation ECLIPSE III - combating illegal trade with a focus on smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco related products. Results:

1.5 million cigarettes seized, 557 kg of raw tobacco, 2 kg of water-pipe tobacco and 354 kg of smoking tobacco

Operation KNOW-HOW III - targeting detection and refinement of counterfeit goods entering Southeast Europe:
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)
2019 Report on the situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling in Southeast Europe
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
Close to 1.5 billion cigarettes seized in Southeast Europe between 2015 and 2018.
Cigarettes smuggling remains a **great threat in our region** and 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...
Organized Crime Threat Assessment
OCTA SEE 2018

- 2 versions: restricted and public
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
KNOW-HOW III Regional Operation

**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
## Type of goods seized

<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>
</tr>
<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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Household items</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>163 kg</td>
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</tbody>
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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