

A NEW ERA DAWNS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MAFIA GROUPS: EUROPOL A KEY PLAYER IN BRAND-NEW OPERATIONAL NETWORK

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[Press Release](#)



- The Operational Network (@ON) strengthens international police cooperation on mafia-style criminal groups, making it possible for EU Member States to request, in coordination with Europol, the deployment of specialised investigators.
- The Italian Anti-mafia Investigation Department / Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (D.I.A.) prepared the project supported by Europol and authorities from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.
- The main criminal groups to be addressed are mafia-style Italian organised crime groups, Eurasian and Albanian criminal networks and Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs.

The ONNET project, financed by the European Commission for 24 months, aims to fund the @ON network, which is composed of Italy (D.I.A. as a driver), Belgium (Federal Police), France (National Police and Gendarmerie Nationale), Germany (Federal Criminal Police Office), the Netherlands (National Police) and Spain (National Police and Guardia Civil).

KICK-OFF MEETING AT EUROPOL HEADQUARTERS

The overarching objective of the network is to achieve advanced international operational police cooperation by exchanging information, monitoring high-level criminals and addressing international

investigations. Furthermore, the grant will support the implementation of the @ON network and the promotion of high-level conferences.

The project's main aim is to provide operational support with specialised investigative units in EU Member States and relevant third parties accredited by Europol. Investigators from the project, who are specialised in this criminal phenomenon, can be deployed to the Member States involved.

The project was officially launched on 1 November at Europol's headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. General Giuseppe Governale, Director of the D.I.A, will lead the project together with the international partners of ONNET and Europol representatives. Director Governale opened the project and held the first meeting together with the Head Europol's European Serious Organised Crime Centre, Jari Liukku.

The Italian Carabinieri General highlighted "The ONNET project, the @ON countries, with the support of Europol's Organised Criminal Groups (OCG) team, will be able to propose a different, cross-cutting action, targeting criminal organisations as such, represented by the high-value targets (HVT) of criminal networks. ONNET will complement the current lack of EU funds in the fight against mafia-type criminal organisations, which is, at present, not an EMPACT priority (European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats)."

Europol's Deputy Executive Director of Operations, Wil van Gemert, underlined the operational nature of the project and added: "The number of organised crime groups in the EU Member States is increasing and they have become more poly-criminal. This project represents a unique opportunity for Europol to provide full support to the law enforcement agencies to tackle these top-level international criminal groups constituting the highest risk to the EU Member States. What will be crucial for the projects to succeed will be identifying high-level criminals and setting up operational task forces between the countries involved to tackle these organised criminal groups and finally bring them to justice.

CRIME AREAS [Mafia-Structured Organised Crime Groups \(OCG\)](#)
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