



**THE DIA SIX-MONTH REPORT
2ND HALF OF 2021**



ABSTRACT

The analysis of the criminal scenario carried out by the DIA in the second half of 2021, based on the outcome of the investigations, judicial and preventive proceedings, once again confirms that the guiding principle of mafia-type organised crime groups is less and less represented by striking acts of violence but by infiltration into the economic and financial sectors. This analysis confirms the trend already mentioned in the last six-month reports and highlights the strategic role played by counteraction of mafia-type organised groups also in terms of tackling their property, curbing the re-use of illicitly gained proceeds in order to prevent the pollution of markets and of the economic public order.

This core approach has allowed so far to sharply reduce mafias' criminal capacity and to prevent severe consequences for the "state system".

On 29 October 2021, the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia celebrated at the Quirinale Palace, in the presence of the President of the Republic, the thirty-year anniversary of its activity.

From that date, 24 cities have been involved in the celebrations, hosting an exhibition called "Travelling Antimafia", that featured the successes achieved by the DIA, an agency which was born also with the sacrifice of many servants of the state, who contributed to create a modern counteraction mechanism against organised crime, which is envied by law enforcement agencies all over the world.

The photographic exhibition 'Travelling Antimafia' moved around the country and, through 34 panels with photos, images and newspaper reports, evoked 30 years of history and passion of the DIA women and men in their fight against mafias.

The exhibition recalled young generations to bear witness to Mafia history and culture; it achieved excellent results and was visited by over 200,000 people.

"Travelling Antimafia" highlighted the large number of activities carried out by the DIA, ranging from judicial and preventive antimafia activities to the fight against criminal infiltration into public procurements, under the coordination of the Prefecture, up to the analysis and development of financial suspicious transactions in close cooperation with the Financial Intelligence Unit at the Bank of Italy and the National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Directorate to counter money laundering. Moreover, it showed the overall number of operations accomplished by the DIA - 1,135 investigations which led to the arrest of 11,478 individuals and the confiscation of assets from mafias for a value of over 7.5 billion euros – and the arrest of 177 fugitives,



including the well-known Leoluca BAGARELLA, Giuseppe MALLARDO, Francesco SCHIAVONE and Angelo NUVOLETTA.

The exhibition also emphasized the qualified and pioneering approach of the DIA, which has increasingly focused its attention abroad developing a close international cooperation both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In this framework, the DIA has always given its support to the offices of the Department of Public Security, working out analysis reports aimed to outline the evolutionary trends of transnational organised crime and planning several training sessions to inform of the most effective methodologies and best practices to counter mafias.

In this regard, mention must be given to the recent @ON project - *Antimafia Operational Network*, financed by the European Commission, aimed to encourage the fight against mafia-style organized crime groups not only at the operational level but also raising the awareness of foreign counterparts on transnational organized crime and mafia-style organized crime groups. The DIA is project leader of the @ON project and 22 counties have become partners so far. Another important initiative involving the DIA as strategic partner is the *I CAN project - Interpol Cooperation Against 'Ndrangheta* carried out by the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police, aimed to increase international police cooperation in the fight against mafia-style organised crime and to dismantle 'Ndrangheta organised crime groups at the global level.

Attention obviously remains high on the national scenario, as shown by the DIA renewed organization at the local level, which was strengthened by the creation on 1st March 2022 of the Resident Office in Potenza, as urged by national and local institutions, so to encourage the fight against mafia-style organized crime groups in that area. Moreover, in October 2022 the Resident Office in Cagliari is going to be opened, which will provide a more stable support to all activities against structured crime groups in Sardinia.

For 30 years, the DIA has been issuing every six months a report on the situation of mafia-style organised crime groups. Dedicated personnel is constantly and daily committed to analysing Italian and foreign organised crime, especially focusing on all kinds of mafia-style activities. A dynamic approach not only describes the operations of mafia-type organized crime groups but also outlines their evolutionary trends in the different geographic areas, making an updated and above all a “predictive” analysis of the situation, which is indispensable to better target the Italian antimafia system.

The aim of this Report is still to early detect the most recent trends of criminal actions and mafia-style operational approaches so to better target the response of the Institutions and offer a more and more effective social protection, carefully analysing



all preventive and judicial investigations carried out at the national level also through international cooperation.

In the margins of the presentation of this document, it is worth highlighting how the aforementioned commitment of the national anti-mafia institutions, and in particular of the DIA, over the years has led to very important results even across borders. National legal systems, though extremely different, have found points of convergence thanks to the efforts made over the years by the Italian institutions and the DIA to raise the awareness on mafia presence abroad and on its relevant threats.

Within the framework of the aforementioned international cooperation to combat organised crime, a long-awaited novelty was introduced in 2020 concerning the use of transnational legal instruments.

Indeed, on 16 October 2020, the representatives of 190 countries attending the plenary meeting of the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime in Vienna unanimously approved a proposal presented by Italy, and known as the *Falcone Resolution*, aimed to update and make more effective the *Palermo Convention* signed in 2000 in order to promote an antimafia counteraction without borders and make it possible to apply all orders of preventive confiscation of assets located in different European countries.

Another concrete element concerning the awareness about the importance of the economic fight against mafias in the EU is highlighted by the subsequent entry into force (19 December 2020) of the “Regulation (EU) No. 2018/1805 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018” concerning the mutual recognition of freezing and confiscation orders. This new instrument of co-operation among MS affirms the principle of the mutual recognition also in the field of preventive asset-related measures. The European Regulation, legally binding and directly applicable, rules all the freezing and confiscating orders issued in the framework of a “criminal proceeding” both subsequent to proceedings linked to an alleged offence and to the absence of a final conviction.

In the same framework, a further proposal was made for a Directive of the Parliament and of the Council dated 25 May 2022 concerning the recovery and the confiscation of assets, COM/2022/245 final, aimed at enforcing the action of national authorities in tracing, identifying, freezing, confiscating, managing and allocating assets stemming from criminal activities, once again based on the Italian model. The European Commission proposes, among other things, to expand the scope of the Directive to a broader range of offences and to envisage the possibility to start confiscation when the person affected by the application of the seizure and confiscation measure cannot justify the legal origin of the assets, as well as the introduction of confiscation for an equivalent



value which should also be allowed in the case the conviction is not possible due to a series of circumstances linked to the suspect or the defendant, such as illness or being at large (already included in the Directive 2014/42/EU) and also death, immunity or amnesty with expiry of the time limits established by the national law.

The provisions included in the above-mentioned proposal are based on art. 83 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE) and require the MS to grant that seized and confiscated assets shall later be efficiently managed until their final destination with view to preserve their value and reduce to a minimum the managing costs.

This international cooperation approach underlines the clear intention of achieving a comprehensive legal framework including all most relevant aspects of the asset recovery proceeding.

In particular, article 28 of the mentioned proposal aims to grant also cooperation among the asset recovery offices of the EU MS and the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), Europol, and Eurojust in order to facilitate the tracing and the identification of assets liable to confiscation.

It is evident that the Italian consolidated experience concerning antimafia measures and, in particular those concerning asset-related preventive measures, represent also for other countries cutting-edge regulations to be inspired by.

As for the Italian mafias, the outcomes of the most important investigations concluded in the semester once again return the image of a silent 'ndrangheta but more determined than ever in its business-oriented approach, as well as leader in the drug trafficking sector.

However, concern persists related to a proven pattern whereby Calabrian organized crime offers entrepreneurs having cash problems parallel forms of financial support, in view of saving their company, but, indeed, with the aim of taking over ownership assets and governance. All this for the dual purpose of laundering their illegal economic resources and taking over large shares of the market, polluting the legal economy.

This threat is represented by the proven ability of the Calabrian groups of approaching and infiltrating that grey area that includes compliant professionals and unfaithful public servants helping to infiltrate the public procurement sector and the broader management sectors of public affairs.

With specific reference to the health sector, where significant critical issues have already arisen over time, the pandemic has highlighted once again its vulnerability, as shown by



the outcomes of a series of recently concluded police operations, better described in the paragraphs dedicated to the Calabrian provinces.

The Calabrian mafia phenomenon, having strong family links that made it, until the recent past, almost entirely immune to the phenomenon of the “cooperating witnesses”, cannot be analysed today without taking into account the unprecedented impact brought about by an increasing number of ‘ndranghetisti in judicial contexts deciding to cooperate with the judicial authority. Furthermore, some judicial proceedings proved that the ‘ndrine are able to relate easily both to the bloodthirsty South American drug trafficking organizations and to politicians, administrators, entrepreneurs and freelancers to achieve their goals.

Thanks to widespread corruption, relationships with local authorities were influenced in order to gain undue advantages in the awarding of public contracts and orders and even to interfere in their choices. The management of public affairs were therefore polluted and electoral competition often altered.

Even outside its territories of origin, the 'ndrangheta demonstrated its considerable entrepreneurial ability thanks to drug trafficking, which determined the growth of its huge economic resources. The Calabrian groups, in fact, are a privileged partner with the most important South American organizations guaranteeing an increasingly solid reliability. On the other hand, this sector reportedly did not decline significantly even in the last period and despite the restrictions on mobility imposed to contain the pandemic.

Also with reference to drug trafficking, the discovery of numerous cannabis plantations in various areas of the region appears significant. This is a circumstance that at present does not make it possible to rule out the involvement of organized crime in the phenomenon of on-site production and processing of illicit substances intended for the market.

Calabrian criminal syndicates have long proven to be extraordinarily able to adapt to different territorial and social contexts by preferring, especially outside national borders, low-profile strategies in line with progress and globalization.

Therefore, beyond the region, in addition to undermining economic-entrepreneurial sectors, the cosche attempt to replicate the original mafia models by leveraging the identity values placed at the basis of 'ndrangheta structures.

As mentioned, the 'ndrangheta, even outside its territories of origin, expresses its entrepreneurial power thanks to the expansion of drug trafficking, which determines the growth of the huge economic resources at its disposal. In this criminal scenario,



significant investigative results confirmed the importance of the ports of Gioia Tauro, Genoa, La Spezia, Vado Ligure, and Leghorn for the landing of narcotics.

The presence of the cosche of the ndrangheta is confirmed in a number of Italian regions (Latium, Piedmont, Valle D'Aosta, Liguria, Lombardy, Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Sardinia) and also abroad, both in European countries (Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, the Slovak Republic, Romania, and Malta) and in the Australian and American continents (with special reference to Canada and the USA).

The Sicilian organized crime has different characteristics in the various areas of the region; in western Sicily, cosa nostra is confirmed to be structured in mandamenti and families and marked by less rigid patterns than in the past, regarding the distribution of the territorial competencies of the aforementioned mafia branches.

The province of Agrigento continues to record an "area" that is also under the influence of another organization, the so-called "stidda", which has succeeded over the years in raising its criminal profile to the point of establishing pacts of mutual convenience with other families. Trapani, strongly influenced over the years by the Palermo-based Mafia, cannot leave aside the role of the fugitive Matteo MESSINA DENARO. Despite being a fugitive, he remains the contact person for all matters of major interest, for the resolution of any disputes and for the appointment of the top echelons of the mafia groups, even those outside Trapani.

Cosa Nostra confirms itself as a basically unitarian organization, increasingly seeking greater interaction among the various mandamenti groups in the absence of a "top commander" connecting the structure. From this point of view, and considering the constant lack of operativeness of the provincial commission of Palermo, the direction and development of operational actions turn out to be exercised mostly by elderly men of honour who have been imprisoned or have recently been set free. For the city of Palermo, in fact, a number of important bosses were released for serving their sentences or because they have been placed on probation or house arrest. Such mafia figures are flanked by young criminals who, profiting from the "important" surname or family link, expand to new territorial and criminal areas in order to replace the imprisoned bosses. Such a situation could generate misunderstandings between the old and the new generation.

In eastern Sicily and in particular in the city of Catania, cosa nostra is represented by the historic families who are flanked by other groups that, although strongly organized and regulated according to the typical patterns of mafia syndicates, show greater fluidity on the structural level being not affiliated with cosa nostra. The numerous law enforcement



activities conducted over the years resulted in the arrest of top leaders and created gaps in leadership positions. In the provinces of Syracuse and Ragusa, the influence of the *cosa nostra* from Catania and the *stidda* from Gela, to a lesser extent, are tangible only in south-eastern Sicily.

The use of violence by all mafia organizations continues to be marginal. Indeed, business plays a central role for the organizations, sometimes they struggle each other but live together in the same territory splitting among themselves their "business". This increasingly silent and business-oriented mafia, therefore, favours a collusive-corruptive *modus operandi* in which business agreements are not made as a result of threats or intimidation but as a result of pacts based on mutual convenience.

In this regard, Catania's *cosa nostra* has long penetrated and mingled in the legal economic tissue of the town, in the entrepreneurial sectors and in the local management of public affairs. Over time, other mafia-type organizations have also pursued the same strategy, abandoning as much as possible the idea of establishing themselves in the territory by means of striking and destabilizing actions against public safety. Therefore, they prefer to identify, within local public administrations and professions or businesses, subjects capable of guaranteeing the illicit interests.

This mafia strategy aimed at strengthening a dialogue with professionals and institutions favours a different approach: i.e. by corruption. However, unscrupulous and violent actions of the past have given way to the need to adopt low-profile strategies of interference and corruption. The control of the territory remains a fundamental need of the organization, but the path taken by the mafias is to penetrate the social and economic landscape by "involving" the public administration through corruption.

In this scenario of economic-productive stagnation, that still suffers from the pandemic crisis and aggravates the expectations especially of the youth, criminal syndicates find fertile ground that could infiltrate the Region's resources also in view of the PNRR funds allocated to Sicily. The attention remains high to prevent the unlawful allocation of EU contributions for the development of rural areas. The activities to combat criminal activity linked to the so-called agricultural mafia are frequent. In this context, the activity aimed at the acquisition of public contributions for agriculture through false declarations and fraud to the detriment of the EU has to be outlined. In fact, in the Sicilian hinterland, the agricultural-pastoral sector represents the driving sector for the economy, which consequently attracts the interests of mafia syndicates that make use of front men and compliant professionals. The phenomenon continues to appear in all its severity, affecting the agricultural-pastoral areas in the heart of Sicily and diverting huge financial flows that, in fact, are withdrawn from the real support to productive activities and the development of the sector, which is therefore destined to become increasingly marginal.



This "business mafia" recurs to shell companies and compliant or subjugated entrepreneurs and continues to confirm its interest in sectors that are vital for the island's economy.

Despite the fact, however, that the most current line of action of *cosa nostra* is to scale down the use of violence for the obvious reasons mentioned above, the DIA, through its central and territorial branches, has been carrying out targeted investigations on the "Sicilian massacres" of 1992 and the so-called "continental massacres" of 1993-1994 for some time, upon authorization of the competent judicial authorities at the national territory.

The large number of activities assigned by the District Prosecutors' Offices has frequently required the direct involvement of the II Branch of the DIA as well. Altogether, the resources of as many as five Field Offices and the II Branch have been engaged in such investigations for more than 30 years.

In particular, the Field Office of Caltanissetta, in the framework of investigations related to the massacre of Via Mariano d'Amelio in Palermo in which Paolo Borsellino and his escort agents lost their lives on 19 July 1992, is carrying out in-depth special investigations into the statements made by a former cooperating witness. He reported to the magistrates that he took part in the massacre, both in the preparatory and the executive phases. The investigations conducted by the Field Office of Caltanissetta have been focused on the search for evidence linked to the statements made by the cooperating witness about his alleged and unproven presence in Palermo, as well as his subsequent participation in the final stages of the bombing.

The analysis of law enforcement activities also confirmed the trend of Sicilian mafia organizations to enter agreements or alliances for the purchase of drugs, in close coordination with Calabrian drug traffickers and along the Colombian-US-Italian corridor, as established by the "Stirpe e tentacoli" Operation, carried out in Palermo by the State Police and the Carabinieri on 20 July 2021 leading to the arrest of 16 persons, including the boss of the Ciaculli mandamento, a criminal structure in Palermo.

Cosa Nostra's strong connection with North American crime should also not be underestimated. Previous investigations had already documented a historical and ever-present relevance of relations with the *cosa nostra* in New York. These aspects also came to light in the six-month period under review thanks to the results of the Carabinieri's "Crystal Tower" operation, which on 14 July 2021 led to the arrest of several members of the Palermo-based Torretta family (Passo di Rigano-Boccadifalco mandamento). The operation brought to light solid links between members of the Torretta family and those of the INZERILLO family, which, until the advent of the Corleonesi led by RIINA



Salvatore, had ruled the Passo di Rigano mandamento, among other things, managing, along the Palermo-New York route, huge drug trafficking.

The interest of Sicilian mafia syndicates, located out of the region, is focused (particularly in Latium, Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, and Molise) mainly on infiltrating the economy by committing tax fraud and money laundering.

The foreign countries most affected by the phenomenon include Spain, Germany, the Slovak Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Malta, Canada and the United States. With reference to Spain, on 17 December 2021 near Madrid, a member of the stidda was arrested by the DIA in Palermo and the Spanish National Police. He had been fugitive for 20 years and according to Judge Giovanni Falcone he was the trait d'union between the Sicilian stidda and some groups operating in Lombardy.

The events that in 2021 affected Campania return a picture of a mafia phenomenon characterized, as stated by the National Anti-Mafia Prosecutor, Giovanni Melillo, by a multilayered and complex decision-making camorra structure, well established in the territory and equipped with top ranking persons, managing and coordinating subordinate groups.

The ability to generate huge profits even through criminal activities with "low judicial risks" has in fact long since transformed the main Camorra cartels into real business holding companies. The activities range from the traditional activities of the so-called "magliari", a crook, active in smuggling and illegal gaming to IT frauds and the control of contracts, from judicial auctions, waste disposal, public and private construction to the new frontier of large tax frauds. The companies are an integral part of the legal economy supported by interconnected relational systems based on personal ties, sometimes even family ties in wide sectors of business and public administration.

All this, moreover, can be summed up by what the affiliates themselves call the "SYSTEM" or a management coordination structure that camorra organizations adhere to in order to achieve common goals in order to exclusively gain illicit profits. However, along with large criminal cartels and that world in which mafia interests mingle with those of enterprises, there is the "camorra of vicoli e stese," (camorra of narrow streets and where low-level affiliates run on motorcycles and shoot against everyone and everything), of the feuds between gangs competing for the control over traditional illicit markets, racketeering and drugs.

The economic power of criminal organizations, also the Campanian ones, is mainly ensured by drug trafficking.



The Campania mafia syndicates focus their attention beyond the region mainly on drug trafficking and money laundering, with particular reference to Latium, Liguria, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Abruzzo, and Molise.

The foreign countries most interested in the phenomenon include Spain, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Romania; reportedly, there were also contacts with Moroccan criminal organizations as to the purchase of narcotics.

In the Apulian mafia, criminal conducts evolve continually. It is traditionally divided into the mafia from Foggia, the camorra from Bari and the Sacra Corona Unita. These groups succeeded in implementing a policy of consolidation and territorial expansion that was marked both by a penetrating and pervasive military capacity of control over the territory and by strong relations aimed at realizing a more evolved model of business mafia. It is precisely the need to give due attention to the complex and deep-rooted phenomena of mafia-type organized crime in Apulia that on 20 July 2021, the "Regional Commission of Study and Inquiry into the phenomenon of organized crime in Apulia" was set up, whose objective is to counter criminal infiltration into public activities also through cooperation with other local administrations, institutions, judicial authorities, law enforcement agencies and representatives of the civil society.

Today, many authoritative institutions define the so-called mafias from Foggia as particularly violent and pervasive and as the most dangerous expression of the Apulian mafias. The mafia in Foggia is indeed a very structured and compact group capable of networking and creating interconnections not only with the historical, Campanian and Calabrian mafias but also with the Trans-Adriatic ones. They do not hesitate to adopt heinous extra-regional territorial expansion actions. Furthermore, a vast pool of low-level criminals is available, made up of mobsters, using violence without restraint and the ready availability of large quantities of weapons and explosives. These continue to be the core elements to which the clans in the province of Foggia commonly refer. These clans combine tradition and modernity and have displayed a growing business inclination and an ability to interact in the so-called grey zone or "mafia bourgeoisie" in which the interests of criminality and some unfaithful members of the public administration and business converge.

In contrast to the dynamic criminal scenario characterizing the province of Foggia, particularly that relating to the Alto Tavoliere and the Gargano areas, the Mafia in Capitanata is characterized by some difficulties. The pressing investigative activity and related court findings have consequently weakened the three batterie (groups) into which the Società Foggiana is divided.



However, it cannot be ruled out that this situation could favour an aggregation process leading to the creation of a common top leading level, even a collegiate body. In fact, it is well known that mafia groups operating in the Foggia territory and province and reproducing the structure of the 'ndrangheta are capable of networking among themselves by adopting similar federal models exploiting the new and innovative globalization challenges. The Foggian organized crime, in order to run ever increasing, diversified and complex business activities, followed the trend of a consortium. By pursuing its illicit aims, it groups together the different syndicates though leaving them a significant independence.

For these reasons, today a number of authoritative institutions define the mafia groups from Foggia as being the most dangerous expression of Apulian mafias. Therefore, the need arises of fighting them not only in a traditional way but also by adopting social antimafia initiatives aimed at further isolating criminal groups by depriving the socio-environmental consensus on which they base their presence, as well as by promoting at the same time an “antimafia culture” in the different social classes, particularly among the young. In this perspective, in the semester under review, a number of initiatives linked to a programme of raising social antimafia awareness, promoted especially by the University of Foggia, took place in Foggia. The highest expression of the programme was the Opening of the Academic Year on 25 October 2021, with the participation of the Italian President.

Also in the provinces of Lecce, Brindisi and Taranto, the criminal police operations in the semester confirm the presence of mafia organizations in different sectors.

Last but not least, the complex criminal phenomena characterizing Bari affect the unstable mafia balance reached by powerful clans, which compete for the control over territories in the town and in the province. This resulted in a persistent instability of the criminal environment, sometimes latent but sometimes, as in the six months under study, marked and violent.

In fact, in the second semester 2021, a number of bloody and violent crimes were reported, always reflecting the decisions taken by the powerful higher echelons of the hegemonic mafia organizations. Sometimes these suggest changes in the criminal structures, in the alliances or more simply in unspoken agreements of non-belligerency and interference.

The drugs-trafficking scenario is continually evolving and the nearness to Albania and drug trafficking activities from the Balkans deeply influence it. The relationship between Apulian organised crime and Albanian syndicates is characterised by the top role played by the latter. These use the routes run by the Apulian cosche in order to transport



narcotics also beyond Apulia towards the international markets. In this regard, mention should be made of the judicial results of Operation “Shpirti” dated 2 July 2021, conducted by the DIA and Albanian authorities, also thanks to Joint Investigation Teams (a judicial cooperation tool set up by the DDA in Bari, the Speciale Prosecutor’s Office against Corruption and Organized Crime in Tirana and Eurojust). The DIA and the Albanian authorities carried out an in-depth joint investigation recurring to the core coordinating role of the National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Directorate. The investigation traced the supply chain of the drugs, ascertaining the existence of 4 powerful criminal groups operating in Albania and in contact with persons close to Bari-based organizations. The latter were able to ship very large quantities of drugs to Europe.

The expansionistic aims beyond the region of the Apulian criminal organizations mainly regard drugs trafficking and the so-called “criminal commuters” for the purpose of committing predatory offences. Their presence was reported in Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Abruzzo, and Molise. There are also contacts with foreign countries, with Albania in particular, for the supply of drugs by sea, but also with Spain, Romania, and the Netherlands.

In Lucania, criminal organizations recently made a quality leap, resulting in an increasingly pervasive presence of criminal groups in the economy of Basilicata. In light of the above considerations, in Potenza a Resident Office of the DIA was inaugurated on 7 March 2022. In the region, single clans, organised mainly on a territorial basis (province of Potenza, area Vulture-Melfese and province of Matera with the Jonian-Metaponto coast), entered alliances with top criminal associations, such as the Calabrian, Apulian and Campanian ones. This is confirmed by Operation “Lucania Felix”, concluded by the State Police on 29 November 2021 revealing the operational existence, and continuity of the MARTORANO-STEFANUTTI clan in Potenza and its close links at the national level with mafia syndicates of the Calabrian ‘ndrangheta, such as cosca GRANDE-ARACRI in Cutro (KR), cosca MANFREDI-NICOSIA in Isola Capo Rizzuto and the BELLOCCO cosca in Rosarno (RC).

The privileged illegal activity is still drugs trafficking as criminal organizations find a wide spaces of cooperation with foreign counterparts. Confirmation of this comes from Operation “Idra” carried out by the Carabinieri on 8 July 2021 which highlighted that Gambian and Nigerian groups operating in the area were involved in the supply and sale of significant quantities of narcotics.

Foreign criminal groups, settled in the area are widespread on the whole national territory and historically show in northern-central Italy a more independent degree in contrast to native groups of these regions, often acting at same level.



Whereas, in the south the situation is more varied, considering that more structured foreign criminal groups, as the Nigerian cults, having a clear internal structure, besides being more subordinated to native mafia organizations or needing their authorization or approval to operate in Sicily and Campania, in the last years they have become increasingly autonomous in relation to the unopposed dominance of local mafias. Initially, the above-mentioned syndicates, as the case in Campania, simply “benefited” from the gaps left by camorra organizations, mainly because the latter have over the years been hit by a number of criminal police operations. Subsequently, they have gained ground and achieved an increasing hegemonic position for example in controlling whole areas of drugs pushing i.e. monopolizing certain drugs supply chains.

Nevertheless, as confirmed by a number of investigations conducted by LEAs, even more important are the strategic and opportunistic alliances which were set up with higher echelons of the native criminal organizations. This leads to infer that new and different trends are under way in the near future. The change in relationships is constantly monitored by targeted investigations as in time it could result in new scenarios concerning historical and consolidated maps of criminal domains. This could change the relationship between local mafias and ethnic mafias, leading to a structured co-existence, making them split up the assets and criminal sectors without any interference.

The main interest of foreign groups in Italy is focused on drugs trafficking. Furthermore, also trafficking in human beings and aiding illegal immigration are significant for the dimension and the dangerousness, as they are among the most profitable sectors of foreign groups, which expand their tentacles over the exploitation of victims for the purpose of prostitution, black labour and forced begging.

Albanian crime groups are always ready to cooperate with Italian criminals, above all in the drug sector, sometimes also in the field of extortion, usury, so to gain control over the territory and take over business activities. Indeed, many investigations highlighted that Albanian crime groups have become reference points for Italian mafias in the drug supply, as demonstrated by the above-mentioned operation “*Shpirti*”, which was concluded on **2 July 2021** and was carried out by the DIA in Bari with the assistance of the Liaison Officer in Tirana and of the Albanian Police.

Nigerian crime groups are active in most of the country, mainly in the major islands - in particular in Palermo, Catania and Cagliari - but also in Latium and Abruzzo.

Considering the high unemployment rate among Nigerians living in Italy, compared with the considerable amount of money remitted from Italy to Nigeria, it is to be assumed that a significant number of unemployed or inactive Nigerians in Italy could potentially be attracted by native or Nigerian criminal gangs and that the remittance



flows – notwithstanding the licitly gained money resulting from Nigerians’ hard work – could also conceal illicitly gained assets.

The criminal interests of Nigerian crime groups are focused on human being trafficking linked to the exploitation of prostitution and forced begging. Moreover, they are increasingly involved in drug trafficking, which is sometimes managed in cooperation with Albanian crime groups. Drug trafficking continues to be the core business of Nigerian crime groups and their presence in multi-ethnic crime groups is also confirmed by the results of the investigations carried out in the period under study.

Indeed, considering their increasing pervasiveness, the DIA Report referring to the second half of 2021 is focused on Nigerian organised crime groups. It must be pointed out that the Nigerian community ranks third in Italy as ethnic African group, after the Moroccan and the Egyptian groups and it ranks first in Europe. This community is extremely important also in terms of crimes committed; Nigerian crime groups are organized as *secret cults*, which are characterized by a hierarchical and paramilitary structure, by affiliation rites, codes of conduct and more generally by a *modus agendi*, which since 2010 has often been defined by the Supreme Court as a “mafia-style” *modus operandi*.

Moreover, investigations revealed that cults regularly organized meetings in different cities and were linked to criminal counterparts operating in several Italian cities. It has become increasingly evident that law enforcement and judicial authorities need to widen and exchange their knowledge to fight against Nigerian crime. The best approach to effectively tackle Nigerian crime is to consider it as a real macro-phenomenon that cannot be separated from knowing its origins and its international ramifications.

Chinese organized crime groups in Italy have long developed a hierarchical structure mainly based on family and solidarity links. Chinese crime groups are quite impermeable in comparison to the other crime groups and hence they are closed and not influenced by other crime groups nor are they ready to cooperate with them. Only occasionally they develop functional agreements with Italian organised crime groups or set up small multi-ethnic groups for the purpose of prostitution, financial crimes and waste trafficking. Besides Tuscany, where Chinese crime groups have grown in parallel with the historical settlements which for decades have been present in the textile district of Prato, Chinese crime groups are also present in Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Campania and Latium. In such areas they set up multifaceted commercial activities, frequently committing crimes linked to the exploitation of labour. Indeed, fellow citizens are sometimes forced to work in the absence of minimum safety and health requirements.



The illicit activity is focused on trademark counterfeiting, methamphetamine trafficking and sale, illicit waste trafficking, management of illegal betting and gaming, commission of economic – financial crimes. **On 12 October 2021**, the Guardia di Finanza in Cuneo within Operation “Drago Volante” reported 19 persons, mainly Chinese nationals and owners of 32 firms, so-called *paper mills* - that had allegedly supplied false invoices for a value of around 220 million euros, evading or not paying VAT for over 46 million euros, 25 of which were probably exported abroad.

Romanian crime groups can be both non-organised syndicates and well-organised associations, comprising multi-ethnic-based groups. The latter mainly carry out complex and more lucrative activities, such as drug and arms trafficking. Moreover, they are historically involved in women trafficking for the purpose of prostitution, IT crimes, predatory crimes and economic crimes. Romanian crime groups are also active in the field of illicit brokerage and the so-called *caporalato* (illegal intermediation and exploitation of migrant workers), sometimes-in agreement with Italian criminals.

Romanian criminals also take part in multi-ethnic drug groups trafficking and selling drugs, within which they play a minor role.

South American organized crime groups are active above all in Northern Italy and Liguria and, to a lesser extent, in Latium. They are involved in the commission of economic crimes and exploitation of prostitution; they cooperate with other foreign or Italian syndicates in trafficking drugs from Latin America. However, *baby gangs* caused great concern in the six-month period under study. Mention is made first of all of the operation carried out on **5 October 2021** by the State Police in Milan, that dismantled a crime group called “*Barrio 18*”, made up of 17 young Salvadorian criminals aged between 20 and 27, committing crimes against the person and economic crimes, as well as drug crimes with the use of weapons. The operation fell within the criminal context of “*pandillas*” or “*maras*”, i.e. Central American street gangs operating in the area of Milan and in Lombardy. These criminals use brutal violence not only to commit crimes but also to settle disputes within the group itself and against rival groups, through the unscrupulous use of knives and *machetes*.

Organized crime groups from the Balkan region and former USSR countries are mainly involved in economic crimes, aiding illegal migration, arms trafficking, fraud, smuggling, exploitation of prostitution, copper theft and drug trafficking. In particular, Bulgarian crime groups are well structured and rely on supranational links for the purpose of exploitation of prostitution of Bulgarian young women.

North-Central African crime groups are less structured in comparison to Albanian and Nigerian syndicates and are mainly involved in drug trafficking. Specifically,



Moroccan and Tunisian nationals are involved in the street sale of any type of drugs, operating within more structured multi-ethnic groups. There are however syndicates where such nationals hold top ranking positions and have links with mafia-style organized crime groups. North-Central African nationals are also often recruited as couriers.

Organized crime groups made up of nationals from the Middle East and South-East Asia are involved in aiding illegal migration and drug trafficking as well as exploitation of black labour. However, they are also involved in the street sale of drugs and sometimes in the exploitation of prostitution. On some occasions, they are multi-ethnic groups (in particular South-East Asian groups are mainly made up of Indian and Pakistani nationals) which cooperate with organized crime groups from the Balkan area, with Turkish and Greek crime groups.

The analysis of the evolutionary trends of mafia-style organized crime groups highlights that tackling illicitly gained assets through judicial proceedings and **asset—related preventive measures** are fundamental tools to counter organised crime.

The scope of the preventive measures carried out in the second half of 2021 proves the utmost strategic importance given by the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia to tackling mafia-style assets. Indeed, the intense activities carried out by the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia aim to strengthen the fight against both the illicitly gained assets of organized crime and its infiltration into legal economy. At the domestic level, in the period under study the following results were achieved, leading to 15 proposals for preventive measures submitted to the Court having the jurisdiction, 10 of which signed jointly by the DIA Director and the Judicial Authority. Moreover, 3 information reports aimed to propose preventive measures were submitted to the responsible prosecutors as part of the investigations carried out on their specific request.

The effective tool represented by the judicial administration envisaged by art. 34 of the Leg. Decree 159/2011 is being increasingly used. In the second half of 2021, the judicial administration of a company was extended for a further period.

The tables below summarize the seizures and confiscations carried out on proposal of the DIA in the period under study. The data referring to the second half of 2021 are compared to the data referring to the previous six-month period.



| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets</i> |
| The DIA Director | 124,000,442.34 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 41,212,956.95 |
| TOTAL | 165,213,399.29 |

| SEIZURES 1st half of 2021 | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| TOTAL | 93,771,071.62 |

| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 25,983,967.41 |
| J.A. based on DIA investigations | 82,611,534.00 |
| TOTAL | 108,595,501.41 |

| CONFISCATIONS 1st half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| TOTAL | 129,307,198.52 |

Seizures/confiscations carried out in the 2nd half of 2021 in relation to each mafia-style organized crime group:

‘NDRANGHETA

| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 7,511,000 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 2,219,406 |
| TOTAL | 9,730,406 |



| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 1,220,000 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 24,508,534 |
| TOTAL | 25,728,534 |

COSA NOSTRA

| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 114,205,749 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 35,554,657 |
| TOTAL | 149,760,406 |

| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 9,314,588.34 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 2,450,000 |
| TOTALE | 11,764,588.34 |

CAMORRA

| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 59,119.57 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 1,978,938.95 |
| TOTAL | 2,038,058.52 |

| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 10,363,400 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | |
| TOTAL | 10.363,400 |



ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS FROM APULIA AND LUCANIA

| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 1,224,573.77 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | |
| TOTAL | 1,224,573.77 |

| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 100,000 |
| TOTAL | 100,000 |

OTHER ITALIAN ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS

| SEIZURES 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 1,000,000 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 1,459,955 |
| TOTAL | 2,459,955 |

| CONFISCATIONS 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>On the proposal of</i> | <i>Value of the assets in euros</i> |
| The DIA Director | 5,085,979.07 |
| J.A. based on the DIA investigations | 55,553,000 |
| TOTAL | 60,638,979.07 |



The accumulation of huge financial resources gained from multifaceted criminal activities must be properly laundered. To this end, mafia-style organized crime groups constantly look for more and more refined solutions, which make it difficult to ascertain the effective ownership of illicitly gained assets.

It is thus necessary to early detect potential mafias' modus operandi with particular attention to their ability **to infiltrate the economy**. In the second half of 2021, the DIA continued to focus its attention on public tender procedures.

In particular, checks were carried out on the organisational structure of the companies involved in public works so to identify potential mafia infiltrations. Such controls take into account both the execution of public works as such and all connected activities. It is a complex control system, which foresees the access to construction sites on request of the Prefect in order to check on the spot potential antimafia violations.

527 companies were monitored. The table below summarizes the results of such controls with reference to geographic macro areas.

| AREA | 2nd half of 2021 | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | COMPANIES | PERSONS |
| North | 111 | 2,786 |
| Centre | 42 | 163 |
| South | 374 | 3,584 |
| Abroad | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 527 | 6,533 |

Within the activities aimed to **prevent the use of the financial system in order to launder illicitly gained assets**, as envisaged by the Leg. Decree No. 231 of 21 November 2007, the DIA is entitled to ascertain the violations of the obligations regulated by the decree and to carry out in-depth investigations into organized crime, the information received through international cooperation and the suspicious transaction reports (STR) transmitted by the Italian Financial Intelligence Unit. For this purpose, in the last years new analysis and development models have been worked out and the relevant software, i.e. *EL.I.O.S. - Elaborazioni Investigative Operazioni Sospette*” (Investigative Processing of Suspicious Operations) has been constantly updated so to better respond to the changed investigative needs. In particular, the



software can process in real time “all” information destined for the DIA so to promptly make data available at the operational level. In compliance with the agreements signed by the DIA with reference to the procedures regulating the info-investigative exchange of information, as envisaged by regulations, all STRs, which, following three analysis steps (massive, phenomenological and risk analysis), come out to be linked to organized crime, are reported to the *National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Directorate – DNA* which shall transmit them to the District Antimafia Directorates – DDA having the jurisdiction when they concern investigations underway or shall assign them to an ad-hoc group made up also of the DIA personnel so that the National Antimafia and Antiterrorism Prosecutor’s Authority may exercise its proposing power under *art. 371 bis c.p.p.*

In this framework, only in the second half of 2021, the DIA analysed 68,955 suspicious transaction reports linked to **639,074** parties reported to the judicial authority. **437,372** of them were natural persons.

Lastly, it is worth stressing that international law enforcement cooperation is essential to counter the infiltration of mafia-style organised crime groups in the economic and productive sectors. It is the privileged tool to fight against more structured organized crime groups considering their ever- increasing cross-border dimension. In this framework, reference must be made to the important instrument represented by the above-mentioned *@On Antimafia Operational Network*, which was conceived by the DIA and of which the DIA is *Project Leader*. The @ON Network primarily aims at encouraging the operational exchange of information and *best practices* to counter “mafia-style” organized crime groups posing a serious threat to the security of the European Union so to enhance international cooperation and the fight against the organised crime groups as such, notwithstanding the crimes committed. In order to effectively fight against mafia-style organized crime groups it is fundamental to clearly and rapidly identify the target to dismantle. A synergic response is given by the @ON Network thanks to EUROPOL, EUROJUST, the financial support and guidance of the EU Institutions. One of the novelties introduced by the Project is the possibility to deploy investigators abroad who are highly specialized in the fight against cross-border crimes (*quick deployment*). Indeed, the @ON Network supports the quick deployment of skilled investigators of participating countries and allows to provide LEAs - *Law Enforcement Agencies* with high-tech investigation means.

Up to now 30 law enforcement agencies have formally adhered to the @ON Network, representing 25 countries: France (SIRASCO and PJGN), Germany (BKA), Spain (UDYCO and Guardia Civil), Belgium (Federal Police) and the Netherlands (National Police) that together with Italy are members of the *Core Group* of the Network.



Together with Europol, also Hungary (National Police), Austria (BK), Romania (National Police), Australia (AFP), Malta (National Police), Switzerland (Federal Police), Czech Republic (NOCA) Slovenia (National Police), Poland (CBSP), Croatia (National Police), Georgia (National Police), Norway (NCIS), Albania (CPD), Portugal (UNCT), USA (FBI), Sweden (National Police), Canada (RCMP), Latvia (State Police) and Luxembourg (Grand Ducal Police) are partners of the @ON Network.

The @ON Network has, so far, supported 55 investigations carried out by the investigative units of the @ON Member States and has financed 171 operational missions in favour of 736 investigators, leading to the arrest of 287 persons, including 5 fugitives and to the seizure of about 11.3 million euros, drugs (including 23 hemp plantations) and weapons.

At the multilateral level, the DIA cooperates both with regard to operations and in making an updated analysis of the evolutionary trends of mafia-style activities at the international level in order to identify assets and links between Italian crime groups and those operating in other countries.

Asset-related investigations aimed at tracing, identifying and seizing assets abroad use two crucial cooperation channels coordinated by EUROPOL: ARO (*Asset Recovery Office*) and CARIN informal network (*Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network*). The ARO Platform is the well-established EU platform aimed at identifying crime related assets to seize and confiscate while the CARIN Network is an international platform having the same goals and comprising law enforcement and judicial authorities of 61 countries.