



## ISF-2023-TF2-AG-ONNET-IBA, Project 101145918 - atON Network OPERATIONAL NETWORK @ON TO TACKLE TOP LEVEL OCGS AND MAFIA-STYLE STRUCTURES

### ABSTRACT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the **@ON Operational Network** was officially approved by the EU Council - JHA<sup>1</sup>, following the proposal of the Italian Antimafia Directorate (DIA).

The “EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025”<sup>2</sup>, *inter alia*, stated:

*“Against this landscape, it is crucial to scale up the dismantling of organised crime structures, targeting those groups that are a higher risk to Europe’s security and the individuals in the higher echelons of criminal organisations”;*

*“At European level, the operational cooperation against mafia-style organised crime groups carried out through the @ON Network facilitates the on-site deployment of specialised investigators across Member States to assist in investigations into cross-border organised crime groups”.*

#### 2. AIMS AND PURPOSES

The purpose of the @ON Network is to strengthen transnational Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) cooperation against top-level organized crime groups (OCGs) and mafia-style affecting the EU Member States, focusing on the OCGs as such, regardless of the offence committed.

The **OCGs under investigation** are mainly Italian, Eurasian, Albanian and outlaw motorcycle criminal gangs, but also new ones (i.e. *Macro Maffie*, Nigerian etc.) posing an increasing threat to the EU security and economy.

#### 3. HOW IT WORKS

The **@ON Network**, in coordination with **Europol** and **Eurojust**, makes it possible to **quickly deploy on the spot** Law Enforcement Agencies’ investigators, partner of the @ON Network, specialized in the fight against this kind of criminal networks.

In this way, LEAs can share the most effective investigative techniques, facilitating the exchange of best practises and the necessary trust relationship.

Thus, the @ON Network supports the existing initiatives to improve the **administrative approach** in the fight against OCGs including mafia-style, with a view to detect and recover the assets illegally acquired by criminal organizations.

The EU Commission, with the ISF<sup>3</sup> *Direct Grant*, is supporting the operational activities of the @ON Network with additional **2 million euros** through the “**atON Network**” Project (ISF-2023-TF2-AG-ONNET-IBA no. 101145918) for 24 months, until 31 January 2026. Negotiations are underway for further funding.

The @ON Network is based on a “**Core Group**” (**Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and The Netherlands**) serving as a control room, with the aim of selecting the investigations on priority targets to be supported.

The **information exchange** uses the SIENA safe channel among the involved LEAs and Europol for the analysis support.

<sup>1</sup> The Justice and Home Affairs Council develops cooperation and common policies on various cross-border issues, with the aim of building an EU-wide area of freedom, security and justice

<sup>2</sup> The EU Commission document COM(2021)170 final, dated 14/04/2021

<sup>3</sup> Internal Security Fund. An ad-hoc *first* project (ISFP-2017-AG-IBA-ONNET-no.817618) started on November 2018, which lasted about 38 months, for an amount of **600.000 euros** and a *second* one “**ISF4@ON**” Project (ISFP-2020-AG-IBA-ONNET-no.101052683) for an amount of **2 million euros**, started on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 till 31 January 2024

#### 4. @ON NETWORK SUPPORT

##### a. Deployment of investigators:

- deployment on the spot of specialised @ON investigators to support the investigative Units of requesting Countries, through *Operational Missions (OM)*;
- operational meetings/action days with the involved LEAs;

##### b. Special Investigation Tools by renting *Technical Equipment (TE)*, reimbursement of operational expenses related to lawful *covert human intelligence activities (CHIS)*, *Undercover Operations (UCO)* and expenses for *Language Assistance (LA)*.

#### 5. @ON NETWORK PARTNERS

Up to now **55** LEAs, representing **45** countries have adhered to the **@ON Network**.

**France<sup>4</sup>, Germany, Spain<sup>5</sup>, Belgium, The Netherlands and Italy** are *Core Group members* of the Network in cooperation with **Europol**. Partners are: **Hungary, Austria, Romania, Australia, Malta, Switzerland, Czech Republic<sup>6</sup>, Slovenia, Poland, Croatia, Georgia, Norway, Albania<sup>7</sup>, Portugal<sup>8</sup>, USA, Sweden, Canada, Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Ukraine, Cyprus, Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>9</sup>, Ireland, Kosovo, Finland, Greece, Moldova, Iceland Brazil<sup>10</sup>, San Marino, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Ecuador, North Macedonia and Principato di Monaco.**

**Italy** is represented by the **DIA** as Project Leader and by the *Carabinieri*, the *Guardia di Finanza* and the *Polizia di Stato* as partners<sup>11</sup>.

#### 6. @ON NETWORK RESULTS

At present, the @ON Network's support to @ON Member States' Investigative Units can be summarized as follows: **306 investigations, 794 missions funded** in favour of **3.372 investigators** - leading to the **arrest of 1.339 persons**, including **23 fugitives** - and the **seizure** of about **274 million euros** (cash and assets), **drugs, weapons**, vehicles, luxury watches and commercial activities and to the identification of assets worth **77 million euros** (cash, cryptocurrencies and assets) for subsequent seizure.

The @ON Network also aims at developing a more structured approach through a closer link with **EMPACT** in the fight against organized crime groups.

*Rome, 31 December 2025*

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<sup>4</sup> Police Nationale and Gendarmerie Nationale

<sup>5</sup> Polícia Nacional and Guardia Civil

<sup>6</sup> Policie České Republiky and Customs

<sup>7</sup> Criminal Police Department (CPD) and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)

<sup>8</sup> Polícia Judiciária (PJ) and Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP)

<sup>9</sup> Directorate for Coordination of Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and BRCKO District Police

<sup>10</sup> Policia Federal and Secretaria de Estado de Segurança Pública de Rio de Janeiro

<sup>11</sup> Coordination, at national level, is provided through the International Police Cooperation Service (SCIP) of the Central Directorate of Criminal Police