

## DETECTED AND DISMANTLED ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS

For the period 1 January 2007 - 24 March 2008

▪ *Dismantled organised crime structures dealing mainly with trafficking and trade in drugs, blackmail, and assaults, with high criminal potential and influence on the crime generating situation in the country*

- Two organised crime groups with 11 members dealing with trafficking and trading in drugs, blackmail, and assaults in the town of Pernik, were dismantled in 2007. The leader of one of the groups was also on trial for car theft done in 2000 and the case was down for hearing on 18 March 2008. He was killed on 19 February 2008 in Pernik. The perpetrator of the murder was arrested on 17 March 2008. Charges were pressed against him for complicity in murder.

- Six cases of preparation of explosions of self-made devices were detected in Blagoevgrad, Varna, Plovdiv, Sliven, and Stara Zagora and six persons were arrested. The contractor and the person who received the errand for placing a self-made explosive device in Stara Zagora were identified. A murder of company owners in the town of Razlog by using self-made explosive device was prevented.

- Four leaders of two groups were arrested in September 2007. Bulgarian and foreign currency amounting to a total of BGN 17,000, white powder substance, cannabis, many mobile phones and SIM-cards, illegally possessed rifle and two gas pistols made into firearms, as well as ammunitions were seized in the course of the searches of the persons and the search activities in their dwellings.

- In February 2008 a member of organised crime group was sentenced to five years of imprisonment for complicity in murder attempted in December 2007 in Sofia. The victim was member of an organised crime group dealing with drug distribution, and is also on trial for complicity in attempt for murder.

- An organised crime group specialised in applying force methods and violence on the territory of South-Eastern Bulgaria was detected in February 2007. Three Kalashnikov submachine-guns, 7 guns, ammunitions, electric detonators and explosives, as well as heroin and amphetamine to the value of BGN 800,000 were seized in the course of the searching activities.

- An organised crime structure was dismantled in the period February - April 2007. It was controlling the trafficking in drugs and their distribution in several regions having the town of Burgas as their centre. The leader of the group and 16 members were arrested. In February 2008 the court approved a plea agreement between the prosecution and the defendants who pleaded guilty. There is an on-going procedure against the leader of the group on forfeiture of criminal assets amounting to MBGN 2.4, as well as assets in bank accounts.

- In February 2008 the Supreme Court of Cassation finally affirmed the imprisonment of three persons who detonated a self-made explosive device that had killed three people.

- In March 2007 nine pre-trial proceedings were initiated against 25 members of organised crime group in Varna controlling the trading in drugs and street prostitution. Two explosions were prevented.
- The criminal activities of an organised crime group in Varna were detected in June 2007. The group was specialised in violence against drug distributors. Charges on establishing and participating into an organised crime group were raised against seven persons.
- The criminal activities of an organised crime group connected to the accused Marinovi brothers were documented. Import and export of liquid fuels, crimes against tax system, and distribution of non-standard oil products conducted through many companies were identified. Invoices, book-keeping documentation, computers, and money in cash were seized in the course of the searching activities in 11 offices. Currency amounting to approximately BGN 130,000 was seized from safety vaults.
- An organised crime group with six members (3 customs officials and 3 shipping agents) was detected in June 2007. They organised a smuggling import scheme and customs frauds with cargo from Dubai and China through the customs at Sofia Airport. A shipment of 500 mobile phones to the declared value of BGN 30,000 was seized. Pre-trial proceedings were initiated. Evidence on the kind, quantity, and the real value of the goods that had been transited through Zurich Airport was collected with Swiss authorities' assistance. Some of the numerous forensic investigations are still undergoing. The criminal investigation is on-going.
- In the course of a joint operation of the National Security Agency and the Prosecutor's Office in February 2008 two Chinese citizens were arrested at Sofia Airport while attempting to leave the country exporting illegally EUR 520,000 gained through cargo smuggling from China into Bulgaria. Three officials of the Sofia Airport were arrested in the course of the operation. The detention measure was affirmed by the Sofia Court of Appeal.
- Charges on establishing and participating into an organised crime group, drug possession and distribution, and trafficking in women, were raised against 10 persons in Ruse.
- An organised crime group specialised in kidnapping, trading in drugs and women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, was detected. A kidnapped person held for a ransom of BGN 200,000 was released in Pazardzhik. Charges were brought against four persons.
- As a result of joint activities with the German prosecution and police, two perpetrators of a kidnapping for ransom were arrested in Germany in September 2007. An accomplice of theirs was arrested in Bulgaria. The arrested people were detained in custody. The investigation is on-going.
- An organised crime group was dismantled in Varna in January 2008. The group had drained through Internet approximately USD 400,000 from bank accounts of U.S. citizens. Charges on establishing and participating into an organised crime group, document fraud, and money laundering, were pressed against the leader of the group and two of its members.

- A specialised police operation on detecting an export channel for falsified currency was carried out in March 2008, in cooperation with the specialised services of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, and Austria. Searching activities were carried out in 7 places in Sofia, jointly with a prosecutor from Sofia City Prosecutor's Office and supported by Europol. A total of EUR 344,000, illegally possessed firearms and drugs were seized. A manufacture for false ID documents was detected. Two perpetrators were permanently detained in custody.
  - A total of 6,096 bottles of alcohol with banderols of expired validity term and 170 l. liquid smelling of anise were seized in the course of a specialised police operation at Lesovo and Kapitan Andreevo border crossing points in February 2008. Pre-trial proceedings were initiated.
  - As a result of the proactive activities of the competent police authorities a murder of a businessman from Stara Zagora was prevented. Due to the quick reaction of the police officers 3 persons were arrested near Sofia on 22 March 2008. In the course of the searching activities half of the requested sum for the murder was found in one of the persons. The contractor was also identified and arrested.
- *Initiated penal prosecution against members of crime groups, for trading in drugs*
- The two main drug trade networks in Plovdiv were dismantled in the period July - September 2007 in Stolipinovo quarter of the town.
  - In February 2008 charges on establishing and participating in organised crime group, possession and distribution of drugs, were brought against two leaders of organised crime groups dealing with distribution of drugs on the territory of the town of Montana.
  - Charges were brought against two members of organised crime group that was distributing drugs on the territory of the town of Sliven.
- *Dismantled organised crime groups dealing with trafficking in drugs*
- A transnational organised crime group with 9 members dealing with trafficking in drugs from Latin America to Europe and laundering of acquired financial resources was detected. The group was acting through fronting companies from the USA and Europe. Bank accounts and real estates were identified. There are grounded suspicions that the property has been acquired through criminal activity. Nine rogatory letters are being executed. Due to a delay in rogatory letters' execution the court changed the detention measure of the leader of the organised crime group to bail amounting to BGN 20,000. The investigation is on-going.
  - An international organised crime group was dismantled, which acted on the territory of Lebanon and Bulgaria dealing with production and trafficking in synthetic drugs for the Middle East. Charges on participating in organised crime group were brought against five persons.
  - The criminal activities of an organised crime group were documented in November 2007. The group was lead by Nigerian citizens based in Bulgaria and other European countries who organised channels for trafficking in cocaine. About

60 kg of cocaine and 3.5 kg of heroine were seized. Charges were brought against three persons.

- The criminal activities of an organised crime group dealing with trafficking in heroin from Turkey were documented in December 2007. The group was lead by a Montenegrin citizen. Charges on establishing and participating in organised crime group and possession of drugs were brought against the leader and four members of the group. They were permanently detained in custody. Approximately 60 kg of heroin were seized.

- Members of an organised crime group dealing with drug distribution and control over the trading in drugs were arrested in January 2008. They were permanently detained in custody.

- An organised crime group of Bulgarian and Turkish citizens dealing with trafficking in amphetamines was dismantled in February 2008. Charges on establishing and participating in an organised crime group, possession and distribution of drugs, were brought against two persons.

- The activities of a leader of an organised crime group dealing with trafficking in drugs in Sliven were documented in February 2008. A total of 36 kg of heroin and 30 kg of amphetamine in tablets were seized.

- *Detected and dismantled organised crime groups dealing with manufacturing, storage and distribution of false currency, IDs and other documents*

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing, storage and distribution of false currency and identity documents was dismantled in Varna in May 2007. Charges were brought against nine members.

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false Bulgarian and foreign identity documents on the territory of Sofia and Pleven was dismantled in May 2007. Forged Bulgarian and foreign passports and driving licenses, blank samples of university and high school diplomas, vehicles controlling documents and registration certificates, a printing press, samples of stamps of institutions, universities and schools, embassies, register agencies and notaries were seized. Charges were brought against three persons.

- The criminal activities of an organised crime group in Sofia were detected in February 2007. The group was dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false Bulgarian and foreign identity documents and currency. Charges were brought against two persons.

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false Bulgarian identity documents in Plovdiv was dismantled in June 2007. Charges were brought against eight members.

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false IDs and other documents in Plovdiv was dismantled in November 2007. A total of 77 false passports from different countries, samples and blanks of foreign IDs, identity documents, and driving licenses, as well as computer equipment, were seized. Charges were brought against nine persons.

- The criminal activities of an organised crime group in Yambol were detected in January 2008. The group was dealing with manufacturing of false identity documents, university and high school diplomas. Charges were brought against the leader of the group.

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false identity documents in Shumen was dismantled in February 2008. False identity cards and driving licenses, passports, photos with names and biometric data, a computer configuration and a laptop, identity cards folio, chemical substances and auxiliary devices were seized. Pre-trial proceedings against seven persons were initiated. Charges were brought against four persons.

- An organised crime group dealing with manufacturing and distribution of false Bulgarian identity documents was dismantled in Sofia in May 2007. Charges were brought against three persons. A skimming device, a camera, transmitting and receiving devices, a data transfer device, false Bulgarian identity documents, as well as copies of identity documents, were seized. Pre-trial proceedings were initiated.

▪ *Initiated penal prosecution against members of crime groups, for frauds with false excise bands*

- An organised crime group was dismantled in Plovdiv, which stored more than 2 million false alcohol excise bands manufactured in Turkey and offered to legitimate and illegal manufacturers of spirits. Damages to the budget to the amount of MEUR 10 were prevented. Charges were brought against the two leaders of the group.

- An organised crime group was dismantled in Plovdiv in November 2007. Its leaders were two Bulgarians and one Macedonian citizen. The group dealt with unlicensed production of cigarettes and printing false excise bands. False bands, cigarettes and two tones of loose tobacco were seized. Pre-trial proceedings were initiated.

▪ *Initiated penal prosecution against members of crime groups, for frauds with false payment cards*

- An organised criminal network was detected, dealing with production and use of false bank cards. It performed its activities on the territory of Germany, France, Norway, Belgium, Great Britain, Austria, and Kenya. The organised crime group consisted of a leader and about 20 members. It possessed trade companies, bank accounts in banks in Kenya, and real estate property in Bulgaria. Execution of rogatory letters is awaited. The investigation is on-going.

- An organised crime group was dismantled, dealing with use of false American Express credit cards, as well as with unauthorised payments for purchasing expensive electronics and other high-quality goods. A Macedonian national was involved in the group. Charges were brought against eight persons.

- An organised crime group was detected and dismantled in Varna in June 2007, dealing with thefts of data from ATMs and production of false cards of payment. Two members of the group were hindered to leave for Germany. 18 false payment

cards, an electronic recording device, a portable computer, a digital camera, a camera and other items were seized from them. Other false payment cards; two portable computers /laptops/, a skimming device, three computer configurations, money transfers documents from abroad; CD with information concerning the manufactured false items and other material evidence for the performed crime activities were seized from other members of the group. Charges were brought against five persons.

▪ *Initiated penal prosecution against members of crime groups, for frauds with false euro banknotes*

- Charges on distribution of false euro banknotes were brought against a member of an organised crime group from Varna. A total of 1,850 false banknotes of EUR 200 par value were seized, as well as 2,000 false banknotes of USD 50 par value.

▪ *Initiated penal prosecution against members of crime groups, for frauds with the European Funds*

- An investigation was finalised in December 2007 and the Prosecution prepared an indictment against 9 members of an organised crime group, who committed frauds with funds under the SAPARD Program to the amount of more than MEUR 7.5.

▪ *Dismantled criminal structures dealing with distribution of pirate software, bank frauds and money laundering*

- The activity of an Internet provider distributing pirate videos and software among more than 5,000 subscribers was suspended in February 2008 in Dobrich. Twelve servers with more than 25 Terabytes pirate production were seized, as well as satellite receivers and other equipment used by the company to distribute 45 TV and 5 radio programs with unauthorised copyrights. Pre-trial proceedings were initiated.

- An attempted bank fraud was prevented in January 2008 in Sliven. As many as four invalid checks to the total amount of MCAD 10 were seized from an Italian citizen. The checks were issued by a Canadian company. Pre-trial proceedings for a document fraud were initiated.

- An organised crime group was dismantled, dealing with illegal transfers and money laundering. The group involved three Bulgarian citizens of Syrian origin, as well as one Tunisian citizen. Evidence was gathered for illegal transfers to the amount of MUSD 1.1. Pre-trial proceedings for money laundering were initiated.

- An organised crime group was dismantled in January 2007, dealing with unlawful appropriation of VAT. The group performed its activities on the territory of Sofia and Vratsa. The audits performed so far have identified damages to the amount of more than MBGN 20.