



Permanent Mission of Italy
OSCE

STATEMENT BY ITALY

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OSCE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERS FOR CO-OPERATION GROUP MEETING
on “Addressing Transnational Organized Crime through Improved Multilateral Co-operation”

Vienna, 10 May 2021

Madame Moderator and Mr. Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU Member states. Allow me now to add some **remarks in my national capacity**, not before expressing my appreciations to you, for choosing today’s key topic, and to the panelists, for their interesting contributions.

I also welcome the active engagement of our Partners and colleagues in this discussion.

As we repeated in the past, the OSCE offers, for its unique membership, an exclusive opportunity to develop an inclusive type of Mediterranean dialogue with a wide range of countries and actors. This is also the case today.

We all know very well that **organized criminal groups active in the Mediterranean** area are involved in multiple criminal activities and above all in drug trafficking, followed by trafficking in firearms, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and illicit trafficking in cultural property.

Recent Italian analysis confirm **the actual strength** of transnational criminal organization originating from the so-called “**Great Maghreb**” (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Mauritania, Western Sahara) **and Nigeria**, even though their activities has decreased due to pandemic. These associations are characterized by the articulation in cells and are active in various European and extra-European countries, interconnected in criminal networks that manage lucrative illicit trafficking.

The main individual incentive in criminal activities **remains “profit”** so that by following its tracks it is possible to increase the chances of success of the prevention and the fight against organized crime. This has been one of the major intuition of **judge Giovanni Falcone**, who adopted an innovative investigative strategy summarized by the motto: “follow the money”.

Regional and international cooperation is in this respect essential. And it is against this backdrop that Italy became the leader of the **ONNET project**, a communication network between European and non-European countries called **@ON**, funded by the EU. The Network is - in our view - **a best practice in prevention**, of great interest for our Mediterranean partners. It aims at strengthening the cooperation among law enforcement agencies to counter mafia-style organized crime groups through:

1. providing on site specialized investigators, as **consultants**;
2. improving **information exchange** in order to develop a more accurate intelligence picture of organized crime;
3. supporting initiatives directed to detect and **recover the assets** illegally acquired by criminal organizations.

I would also like to mention the initiatives in the Region undertaken by our National Anti-Corruption Authority (**ANAC**), which has excellent collaborations with the competent Authorities of Tunisia, Jordan and Morocco.

Let me finally recall that, through our Ministry of Justice, Italy is an active **partner of the relevant EuroMed justice Program**, entitled “*Protecting the EU neighbouring countries’ citizens against criminal activities, respecting the rule of law and fundamental human rights*”. The program, which has strategic importance for Italy, promotes closer cooperation in criminal matters with all our Mediterranean partners and involves the OSCE and UNODC. A critical achievement of this program has been the **establishment of an Expert Group in Criminal Matters**, fostering dialogue and trust among the participants. **The next phase** will focus on the actual needs of the judicial authorities, in a spirit of **respect for the different legal traditions**.

I thank you.