

Commission to tackle the links between organised crime and corruption

The European Commission has today issued a staff working document examining the links between organised crime and corruption. The paper draws together existing information to identify situations where Organised Crime uses corruption as a tool for infiltrating the public and private sectors. It reviews existing counter-measures and concludes that a better understanding of the links between organised crime and corruption is much needed. The Commission will therefore launch a study to examine what is an increasingly disturbing and largely unexplored phenomenon.

Vice-President Franco Frattini, EU Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, stated: "costs of corruption represents up to 5% of the world's economy which corresponds to more than 1 trillion €. The EU must take action. I am determined to clip the wings of organised crime by every possible means. Organised crime uses bribery to facilitate its criminal activities and insulate itself from investigation and prosecution. This situation cannot continue. Counter-measures are already in place to attack their ability to launder the proceeds of their criminal activities, and to criminalise the giving and receiving of bribes in both the public and private sectors. Now I intend to pave the way for developing the next generation of responses."

The paper draws attention to the growing phenomenon of financial corporate crime involving multiple individuals, which comes within the EU's definition of "organised crime" although not necessarily associated with traditional organised crime groups. Notwithstanding the existing measures in the EU and beyond, it is vital to be better informed and prepared when tackling the use of corruption by criminals operating in sophisticated organised crime groups.

The study will focus on the following three themes:

- –research the dynamics of both "classic" organised crime and "corporate" organised crime, to identify when corruption, rather than other tools, is the preferred method;
- –identify the specific vulnerabilities to corruption within private sector organisations; and
- –consider how and when the link between organised crime and corruption can be defined.

The study will provide a starting point for assessing both the trends, and the effectiveness, of the various preventive and repressive measures currently in place or under development at Member State and EU level. Relatively little is known about the vulnerability of private sector organisations to corruption in comparison to the public sector. The study will therefore explore this dimension. The results of the study will also feed into the Commission's work to develop statistical analysis and comparable crime statistics.

To find out more about Vice President Frattini's work please visit his website:
http://www.ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/frattini/index_en.htm

Staff working paper on organised crime and corruption:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/intro/news_intro_en.htm