

**Meeting with Ben Ryan, Assistant Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy at the Department of Justice of Ireland, and Michael McElgunn, Assistant Commissioner at the Crime and Security Intelligence Service of Ireland's National Police and Security Service (*An Garda Síochána*) - Dublin, 3 October 2024**

On 3 October 2024, in the margins of the Autumn Meeting in Dublin, MP Eugenio Zoffili, Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held two institutional meetings in his capacity as the Assembly's Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime.

The main topic of the meeting with Ben Ryan, Assistant Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy at the Department of Justice of Ireland, was the fight against drug trafficking. Mr. Ryan provided a detailed overview of the current situation in his country, with a particular focus on the main organization running heroin and cocaine trafficking. He also emphasised that in order to fight organized crime, it is essential to forge coalitions with partners in and outside Europe and have adequate financial resources. The Irish government has adopted a number of programmes to counter youth crime, including family support measures and funding for programmes in schools.



The meeting with Michael McElgunn, Assistant Commissioner at the Crime and Security Intelligence Service of Ireland's National Police and Security Service (*An Garda Síochána*), focused on the information gathering and law enforcement activities of the National Police. The main source of financing for criminal organizations is drug trafficking, followed by money laundering, arms trafficking and human trafficking. Such organizations are mainly involved in sexual exploitation and agricultural

labour exploitation at the international level.

Emphasis was also placed on problems that may arise from court decisions regarding privacy, which end up limiting the investigative capacity of the Police. Lack of information becomes a security threat. Ireland's legislation on the freezing of assets has forced many criminal leaders to leave the country and operate from abroad. Ireland has a witness protection programme in place and new legislation has been introduced to fight criminal gangs. Cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence pose an international challenge.

Finally, the critical importance of international cooperation was underlined to counter phenomena that are often cross-border in nature.