



**ITALIAN MP
EUGENIO
ZOFFILI**

**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
ON COMBATING
ORGANIZED CRIME**



REPORT
*September 2023
August 2024*

ITALY



PARLAMENTO
ITALIANO

OSCE PA

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



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CONTENTS



BIOGRAPHY	5
MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE	6
SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM ON "FENTANYL"	7
REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES	8
A) Zoffili meets the Ministry of the Interior's anti-drugs chiefs: "It is essential to intensify measures against drug trafficking in the Mediterranean" - 1 August 2024	8
B) Zoffili confirmed as Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime of the Parliamentary Assembly - 31 July 2024	9
C) Special Representative Zoffili: "Resolution Fentanyl Adopted" - 3 July 2024	10
D) Special Representative Zoffili: "Italian resolution against Fentanyl at the Bucharest OSCE Parliamentary Assembly" - 26 June 2024	14
E) Special Representative Zoffili meets with Central Director of Italy's Anti-Drug Services - 10 April 2024	15
F) Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Zoffili meets with senior officials of Italy's Department for Anti-Drug Policies - 4 April 2024	16
G) Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Zoffili: "Committed to the fight against mafias for a future of legality" - 11 March 2024	17

CONTENTS



H) Visiting Rome and Lampedusa, high-level OSCE PA delegation stresses need to support Italy's migration efforts and combat human trafficking - 8 March 2024	18
I) In Vienna, OSCE PA Special Representative Zoffili builds new partnerships to fight organized crime - 30 January 2024	21
J) Online meeting with Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and the other Special Representatives. At work to ensure safety and combat all forms of crime - 20 October 2023	28
K) Eugenio Zoffili has met Interior Minister Piantedosi and has introduced the fight against drugs and mafias into the OSCE debate - 6 October 2023	29

OSCE PA

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



BIOGRAPHY

OSCE PA President Pia Kauma (Finland) appointed Eugenio Zoffili (Italy) as Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime in September 2023.

Engaged in politics since his youth, Eugenio Zoffili has been a member of the Lega-Salvini Premier group in the Chamber of Deputies since 2018. He is currently a member of the Chamber's Defence Committee and of the Committee on Elections. Since 2018, he has been the Chairperson of the Italian section of the Italy-Japan IPU Friendship Group. Additionally, Eugenio Zoffili serves as the Head of the delegation of Italy to the OSCE PA. Former Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee for monitoring the implementation of the Schengen Agreement, overseeing Europol's activities, monitoring and supervising immigration, he was also a Member of the Committee on Foreign and EU Affairs.

I am a staunch believer in multilateralism, our Organisation, its initiatives and its role aimed at achieving Peace and upholding the values of democracy:

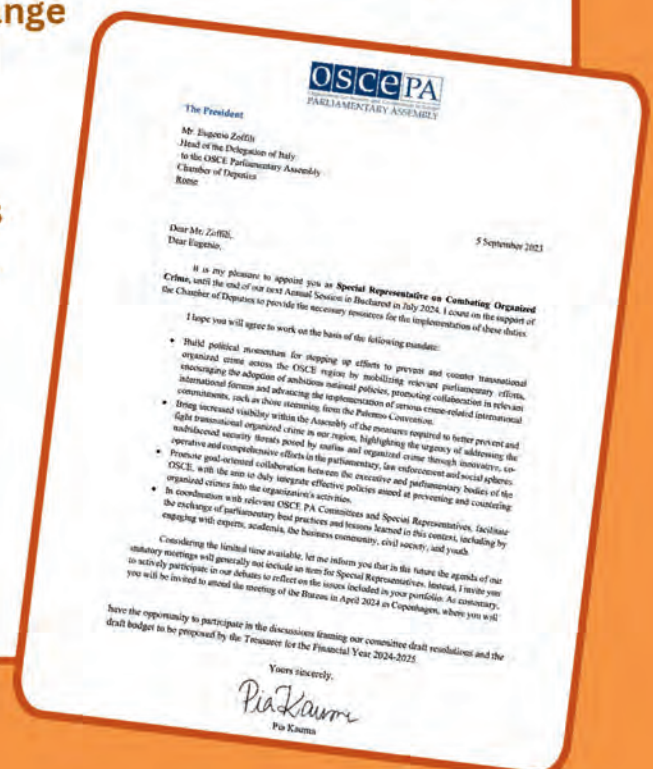
- to support the position of Ukraine as the victim of unjustifiable Russian aggression;
- to support a negotiation process aiming at a two-state solution in the sensitive Middle East scenario;
- to counter the despicable trafficking of human beings that is fuelling migration flows and which, together with the traffic in drugs and illegal substances, is the very lifeblood of the mafias and criminal organisations that are making immense profits from it;
- to put the Mediterranean question, too, at the heart of the debate.

Eugenio Zoffili



MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

- Build political momentum for stepping up efforts to prevent and counter transnational organized crime across the OSCE region by mobilizing relevant parliamentary efforts, encouraging the adoption of ambitious national policies, promoting collaboration in relevant international forums and advancing the implementation of serious crime-related international commitments, such as those stemming from the Palermo Convention.
- Bring increased visibility within the Assembly of the measures required to better prevent and fight transnational organized crime in our region, highlighting the urgency of addressing the multifaceted security threats posed by mafias and organized crime through innovative, co-operative and comprehensive efforts in the parliamentary, law enforcement and social spheres.
- Promote goal-oriented collaboration between the executive and parliamentary bodies of the OSCE, with the aim to duly integrate effective policies aimed at preventing and countering organized crimes into the organization's activities.
- In co-ordination with relevant OSCE PA Committees and Special Representatives, facilitate the exchange of parliamentary best practices and lessons learned in this context, including by engaging with experts, academia, the business community, civil society, and youth.



SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM ON “FENTANYL”



The fight against drug trafficking, which is the lifeblood of mafias and organised crime, is one of my priorities. Therefore I have submitted a Supplementary Item on this issue, so as to raise the awareness of our Assembly on the danger of new drugs, notably Fentanyl, which must be combated and prevented.



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SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

ON

**“COUNTERING THE PROLIFERATION OF DRUGS,
PARTICULARLY FENTANYL AND OTHER SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS,
AS WELL AS MAFIAS AND CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS
INVOLVED IN TRAFFICKING THEM”**

**PRINCIPAL SPONSOR
Mr. Eugenio Zoffili
Italy**

BUCHAREST, 29 JUNE – 3 JULY 2024

Eugenio Zoffili



REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES



OSCE, Zoffili meets the Ministry of the Interior's anti-drugs chiefs: "It is essential to intensify measures against drug trafficking in the Mediterranean".

August 1 2024

Rome, 1 August 2024 - "Yesterday, in Rome, I had the pleasure of meeting the Carabinieri Major General Pierangelo Iannotti, Central Director for Anti-Drug Services of the DCSA (Central Directorate for Anti-Drug Services) of the Ministry of the Interior, and his Director of the General and International Affairs Service, Carabinieri Brigadier General Giuseppe Donnarumma, to discuss strategies to combat drug trafficking and organised crime.

That meeting also gave me the opportunity to thank the DCSA on its excellent record, and for its invaluable contribution to the drafting of the resolution bearing my first signature on the

dangerous dissemination of 'Fentanyl', which was approved in July at the OSCE Annual Assembly in Bucharest, where Italy played a leading role. One of the most important aspects to emerge from the meeting was the need to step up our defences to combat drug trafficking in the Mediterranean. Italy's strategic position makes us a benchmark in the area, not only to guarantee the security of our borders, but also to put an end to this lucrative source of profit and lifeblood for all the mafias and criminal organisations involved.

As the Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on Combating Organised Crime, I renew my commitment to represent Italy and all the Countries of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to confront this challenge, working together to build a coordinated strategic response at the parliamentary level that will support the enhancement of all useful countermeasure on the ground".

So Eugenio Zoffili, President of the Italian Delegation and Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



OSCE, Zoffili confirmed as Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime of the Parliamentary Assembly



July 31 2024



Rome, 31 July 2024 - The Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Eugenio Zoffili, has been confirmed by President Pia Kauma as the Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime of the international organisation, which has 57 participating Countries and 11 partner Countries.

"I wish to thank the President, my Finnish colleague Pia Kauma, for renewing her confidence in me, and for confirming me in this important role, notably in combating organised crime and mafias on behalf of all OSCE Assembly countries for another year, until the end of the Annual Session in Porto in July 2025," said Zoffili.

"Since my appointment, through the joint mission I conducted in Lampedusa together with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on

Migration, I have raised the Mediterranean question to the heart of the debate.

Moreover, the recent adoption at the 31st Annual Session in Bucharest of my resolution on combating the proliferation of new drugs, with particular reference to Fentanyl, will enable us to promote and strengthen measures at the international level against the main source of finance of the mafias and transnational crime. I shall continue to play the role

entrusted to me with the utmost commitment and determination, working to promote the adoption of innovative, cooperative and global responses to the numerous security threats posed by mafias and organised crime by all the Parliaments of the 57 participating Countries".





Drugs, Zoffili: “Italian resolution against Fentanyl adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest”

July 3 2024

"I am proud to announce the adoption, at the 31st Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly that ended today in Bucharest, where I headed the Italian Parliamentary Delegation, of my resolution on countering the proliferation of new drugs, with particular reference to Fentanyl, as well as the mafias and criminal organisations involved in trafficking them, which was signed by 43 parliamentarians from 19 countries (text at: <https://linktr.ee/EugenioZoffili>) and has become an integral part of the Final Declaration of the meeting.

When I presented the document, I stressed the need to confront this challenge with a multidimensional approach combining healthcare measures, law enforcement and synergistic international cooperation, both to protect the victims of addiction and to manage its consequences from a safety and public health perspective. I wish to thank my colleagues who have voted for the Italian resolution, committing the Parliaments of the



57 participating states to adopt measures to raise awareness of the dangers of Fentanyl and synthetic opioids, while providing effective health care and support services to those who have fallen prey to this sophisticated network which is backed by international organised crime and mafias, for whom the production and trafficking of illegal substances is one of their main sources of funding."

So Eugenio Zoffili, Head of the Italian Delegation and Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



"COUNTERING THE PROLIFERATION OF DRUGS, PARTICULARLY FENTANYL AND OTHER SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS, AS WELL AS MAFIAS AND CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN TRAFFICKING"



SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

ON

"COUNTERING THE PROLIFERATION OF DRUGS, PARTICULARLY FENTANYL AND OTHER SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS, AS WELL AS MAFIAS AND CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN TRAFFICKING THEM"

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR
Mr. Eugenio Zoffili
Italy

BUCHAREST, 29 JUNE - 3 JULY 2024

Mindful of the mounting global threat to human health posed by the proliferation of drugs and especially fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, which are responsible for a major health emergency in the United States as a result of the devastating consequences of the abuse of these substances; namely, instant and insidious addiction, the deaths of thousands of people, and the destabilization of entire communities,

2. Given the huge profits generated by the criminal activities associated with the ever-increasing proliferation of these new substances that have attracted additional interest on the part of transnational criminal organizations, which also exploit the dark web and other digital platforms to expand their illegal trafficking,

3. Reaffirming the importance of co-operation and international efforts to clamp down on illicit production and trafficking and on the criminal networks running the illegal trade in fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, on top of the already existing criminal activities involved in drug trafficking,

4. Welcoming the international measures designed to counter the proliferation of drugs, including the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), soon to become the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), as well as the United Nations Synthetic Drug Strategy 2021-25 launched by the UNODC (the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), as well as the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), the United Nations Vienna Convention on against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs (1988), Decision 5/05 on Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs, adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council on 6 December 2005, Decision 1048 on the OSCE Concept for Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors, adopted by the OSCE Permanent Council on 26 July 2012, and the conclusions of the OSCE Conferences to counter illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime, in order to stop the proliferation of illicit drugs and diversion of the chemical precursors,

5. Also considering the importance of national actions, supported by the international framework of reference, including the recent 'National Prevention Plan against the abuse of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids',

adopted by the Italian Government to prevent the proliferation of these substances in Italy and to raise the awareness of the general public, and especially the younger generations, of the danger of consuming them,

6. Emphasizing the urgent need to counter the mafias and criminal organizations that profit from the illicit trade in fentanyl and other synthetic opioids by adopting a systemic approach, such as the one promoted by the US-led 'Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats' initiative, and the study and analyses carried out by the 'European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction', soon to become the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA),

7. Noting the G7 Leaders' Statement on synthetic drugs threats of 29 April 2024, with particular reference to fentanyl,

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly:

8. Urges the participating States to enhance cross-border co-operation and the exchange of experiences within the OSCE in order to counter and dismantle the criminal organizations engaged in drug trafficking, and in particular in the illicit production and distribution of fentanyl and synthetic opioids, including the chemical precursors used to produce them;

9. Calls upon the participating States to strengthen their legislation and law enforcement measures to target all the parties responsible for illicitly producing, trafficking, and distributing these new substances, and the corresponding laundering of their proceeds, in addition to the already known illicit practices related to drug trafficking;

10. Encourages the participating States to invest in public health schemes and national plans to prevent and combat drug use, in particular the illicit use of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, by raising public awareness of the dangers of drug use and by providing effective medical treatments, and health care and support services for people who have succumbed to addiction;

11. Recommends the establishment or reinforcement of national and international task forces dedicated to combating criminal activities linked to trafficking, including online trafficking, particularly of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, while simultaneously raising training standards of law enforcement officers on these substances and their risks, such as those posed by unintentional contact;



12. Calls on the OSCE participating States to strengthen their border surveillance measures to intercept illicit drug shipments and trafficking, especially those organized via the dark web and other digital platforms, in particular of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, by using innovative technological solutions and adopting forensic techniques to improve the detection of these substances;
13. Welcomes the initiatives taken by several countries, such as those of the Italian Government, and encourages participating States to exchange best practices, expertise and intelligence in order to step up international co-operation;
14. Supports the efforts of the Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime aimed at raising the visibility of issues relating to drug use and trafficking and related criminal activities, by promoting multilateral information exchange including through meetings and visits aimed at increasing co-operation between OSCE States, international organizations and relevant actors, in order to protect public health, promote the rule of law, combat crime and any mafia and safeguard the security of citizens;
15. Calls on the OSCE Secretariat to expand its international co-operation network in order to strengthen its systems for monitoring and analysing the proliferation of drugs, especially the illicit use of fentanyl and the related activities of mafias and criminal organizations, and to encourage the sharing of relevant experiences between the participating States and the development of joint training projects to counter these criminal phenomena and activities;
16. Resolves to remain actively involved in analyzing and combating criminal phenomena and activities related to drug trafficking, particularly fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, and to explore the most appropriate regulatory actions to prevent their further proliferation, while safeguarding public health and security in the participating States.



World Drug Day, Special Representative Zoffili: "Italian resolution against Fentanyl at the Bucharest OSCE Parliamentary Assembly"



June 26 2024

"Today, as we celebrate the World Drug Day, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, and in my capacity as the Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I would like to sincerely thank the men and women of the law enforcement agencies, in Italy and abroad, who are committed every day, with professionalism and courage, to combating the trafficking of illegal substances, which is one of the main sources of funding for organised crime.

The alarm over the diffusion of new drugs, especially among young people, which was raised yesterday at the conference on the Annual Report to Parliament on drug addiction, is yet further confirmation of the

topical relevance of my resolution on countering the proliferation of new drugs, especially



Fentanyl, as well as the mafias and criminal organisations involved in trafficking them, which I have tabled and which will be dealt with as a supplementary item on the agenda of the 31st OSCE Annual Parliamentary Assembly starting on 29 June in Bucharest, where I will be heading the Italian Delegation. Nipping in the bud the propagation of these serious threats to the very foundations of our society, beginning with our youngest people, is a priority demand on which we are relentlessly continuing to work, both at home and throughout the OSCE Region, in order to safeguard the health and safety of our citizens".

So Eugenio Zoffili, Head of the Italian Delegation and Special Representative on Combating Organised Crime of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Special Representative Zoffili meets with Central Director of Italy's Anti-Drug Services

April 10 2024

ROME - OSCE PA Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime, Eugenio Zoffili, met on Wednesday 10 April in Rome, at his offices in Palazzo San Macuto, with Major General of Carabinieri Pierangelo Iannotti and Lieutenant Colonel of Carabinieri Salvatore Leotta, respectively Central Director and Director of the Analysis Section of the Central Direction for Anti-Drug Services, a multi-agency body of the Department of Public Security under the direction of the Chief of Police.

The Central Direction is tasked with implementing the directives issued by the Minister of the Interior in the areas of coordination of law enforcement agencies, planning and management of the law enforcement services with the aim of preventing and combating illicit traffic in drugs and psychotropic substances. Special Representative Zoffili is gathering important insights, which he is ready to share with his colleagues from the 57 OSCE PA participating States at upcoming international events. Drug trafficking is a fuel for the engine of mafias. This is why it is even more important to prevent and combat, both within individual countries and internationally, any trafficking in illicit substances, which is one of the major activities of organized crime.





Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime

Zoffili meets with senior officials of Italy's Department for Anti-Drug Policies

April 4 2024

ROME – OSCE PA Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime, Eugenio Zoffili, met on Thursday 4 April in Rome, at his offices in Palazzo San Macuto, with senior officials of the Department for Anti-Drug Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Government: the Head of the Department, Mr. Paolo Molinari, and the Coordinator of its Technical-Scientific and General Affairs Office, Ms. Elisabetta Simeoni.

As a follow-up to his previous meetings with the Italian Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, and with representatives of the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime, at the UN Headquarters in Vienna, Special Representative Zoffili has acquired new insights, which he is ready to share with his colleagues from the 57 OSCE PA participating States at upcoming international events.



The fight against drug trafficking, the main source of funding for criminal syndicates, is a challenge that can only be met by joining forces and implementing common practices, as is the case for crime. This is the focus of Special Representative's current activity, also with a view to the forthcoming Annual Session to be held in Bucharest between the end of June and the beginning of July, in full compliance with the mandate he received from the President of the Assembly, Pia Kauma.

Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime

Zoffili: "Committed to the fight against Mafias for a future of legality"



March 11 2024



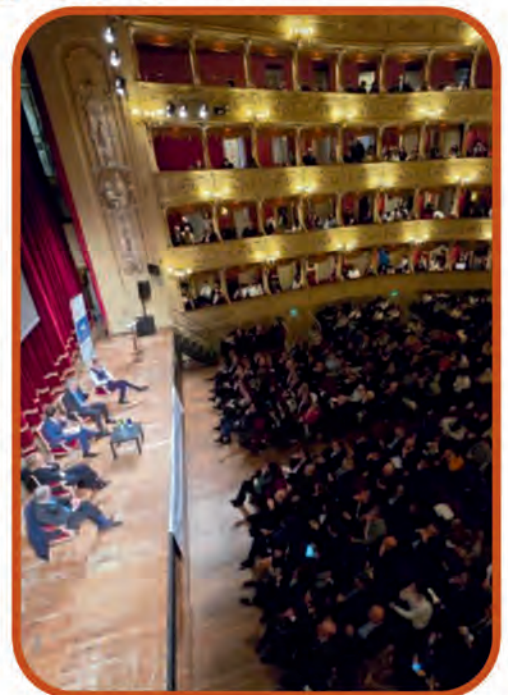
COMO - On Monday, March 11, 2024, OSCE PA Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime, Eugenio Zoffili, took part in the conference on "The Response of the Institutions to Mafia Massacres: Society Starts Over Again from Legality," organized in the Italian city of Como by the Autonomous Police Union (SAP) in the presence of prestigious authorities, as well as a large audience of 650 high school students.

An important event to recall is that the fight against the Mafia is a constant and multi-faceted duty that involves institutions, civil society, and individual citizens, which is why it is necessary to promote a culture of legality and fight against the Mafia through education in schools.

On the same occasion, the shrine containing the remains of the "Quarto Savona 15" was exhibited, the car in which police officers Antonio Montinaro, Vito Schifani, and Rocco Dicillo lost their lives in Capaci, Sicily (Italy), on May 23, 1992, while escorting magistrate Giovanni Falcone, who was barbarously murdered together with his wife Francesca Morvillo in that tragic attack. It stands as a symbol of the fight against the Mafia.

The conference was attended by Ms. Tina Montinaro, the widow of Falcone's police escort officer Antonio Montinaro, whose words were an important signal of hope and commitment against the Mafia. Her testimony is a powerful tool to educate and raise awareness about the importance of fighting organized crime and defending legality.

Special Representative Zoffili thanked the Como SAP, and in particular its provincial secretary Igor Erba, for organizing the event, which allowed many young people to learn about the stories and experiences of women and men who wear their uniforms every day with honor and a high sense of State, doing their utmost to ensure the safety and security of citizens. He also assured his commitment to keeping the spotlight on mafia phenomena and sharing the good practices implemented in Italy with international interlocutors, to offer the new generations a future of security and legality.



Visiting Rome and Lampedusa, high-level OSCE PA delegation stresses need to support Italy's migration efforts and combat human trafficking

March 8 2024



LAMPEDUSA – OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Pia Kauma (Finland) joined members of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Committee on Migration, chaired by Vice-President Daniela De Ridder (Germany), and Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Eugenio Zoffili (Italy) on an official visit to Rome and Lampedusa this week to witness first-hand the challenges faced by Italy in dealing with irregular migration.

With the Central Mediterranean route from Africa to Europe once again the most active – and deadliest – route for migrants entering the European Union irregularly, and with Lampedusa at the front line due to its proximity to North Africa, the OSCE PA delegation noted that Italy deserves continued support for managing the migration flows, and that the international community must do more to jointly address irregular migration as well as drivers of migration.

“Migration is a global phenomenon that requires a co-ordinated approach,” President Kauma said. “The efforts of Italy and the EU to address irregular arrivals seem to be bearing fruit, with numbers so far down by 70 per cent in 2024 compared to last year. We must continue to learn from this experience and to work together to ensure that we are better prepared to meet the challenges ahead. OSCE parliamentarians can furthermore contribute by ensuring that our legislative frameworks support sustainable migration governance.”

President Kauma's participation underscored the significance of migration on the OSCE PA's agenda and the importance that the PA attaches to the challenges faced by Italy, she stressed. In Rome, she held a bilateral meeting with Lorenzo Fontana, President of the Chamber of Deputies, in which the sides discussed a range of issues facing the OSCE area, including migration, as well as Italy's support for the PA's activities.



Ad Hoc Committee Chair De Ridder said that there must be closer co-operation with other frontline countries around the Mediterranean. “Offers of help are always about the dignity of the refugees and this is managed in an orderly fashion on Lampedusa”, De Ridder said. “Lampedusa is a place where tragedy and hope mix with a lot of potential. We often cannot understand the willingness to take risks of refugees who want to reach Europe by sea, but we must work more intensively on the causes of flight, especially conflict, poverty and climate change.”

One of the main focuses of the visit was understanding how organized criminal networks exploit mixed-migration flows to traffic human beings and smuggle migrants across borders. The delegation noted that criminal groups have increasingly used the Central Mediterranean route to boost their illegal operations. During their perilous journeys, many migrants and asylum seekers fall prey to unscrupulous trafficking rings, and are subsequently exploited for sexual or labor exploitation in countries of transit and destination.

Special Representative Zoffili, who serves as Head of Italy’s OSCE PA Delegation, said that it is important to keep a strong focus on the criminal element related to irregular migration. “Migrant smuggling and human trafficking are closely related, albeit different, crimes that exploit vulnerable people for financial gain,” said Zoffili. “The organized criminal networks that profit from these crimes are usually interlinked, and often they are also involved in other dangerous criminal operations, such as drugs and weapons trafficking.



Combating these criminal cartels should be a top security priority for all of our countries. In this regard, there is much that can be learned from the Italian experience.”

In meetings with law enforcement and asylum policy officials in Rome, the OSCE PA delegation learned about the techniques that criminal networks use to evade detection, as well as the internal operations of these networks. They also heard how Italian border police authorities provide technical support to border police in Tunisia to improve their professional capacity to manage irregular sea migration and counter terrorism. Training activities also include a human rights component, the delegation heard.

Visiting Lampedusa, the delegation was briefed on the situation at the Air Force base and visited the Contrada Imbriacola ‘Hotspot’ managed by the Italian Red Cross where they met with a broad range of interlocutors including representatives of law enforcement agencies, Frontex, Europol, EU Asylum Agency and also representatives of UNHCR, IOM, and Save the Children.



Accounting for about 70 per cent of all arrivals on Italian soil in 2023, migrants arrive in Lampedusa on small boats from North Africa (Tunisia and Libya), committee members were told. Following an agreement reached with Tunisia, arrivals from Tunisia have gone down, with Libya again the main point of departure for the boats. The Mediterranean crossing continues to be the most treacherous route for migrants on record, with at least 3,129 deaths and disappearances. This is the highest death toll recorded in the Mediterranean since 2017.

Committee members also visited Favaloro Pier, where about 11,000 asylum seekers arrived over a four-day period in mid-September 2023. Meeting with Guardia di Finanza and Coast Guard officials, committee members learned about the challenges posed when an enormous influx of migrants arrives over such a short period. The remoteness of this small island of 6,000 inhabitants which is closer to Africa than to Sicily and the rest of Italy is one of the main challenges.

Italy's achievements in coping with the crisis was highlighted: migrants arriving in Lampedusa go through an efficient process, including health screenings, pre-identification and screening for vulnerabilities. The delegation also discussed lessons learned from agreements with third countries such as Libya, Tunisia and Albania, and whether there are sufficient human rights safeguards. The new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, including accelerated border procedures as well as the proposed solidarity mechanism and their expected impact on vulnerable categories of migrants, notably unaccompanied minors, women and potential victims of trafficking, were also discussed.

In addition to President Kauma, Chair De Ridder and Special Representative Zoffili, members of the delegation included Ad Hoc Committee Vice-Chairs Kyriakos Hadjiyianni (Cyprus), Farah Karimi (Netherlands), and Gudrun Kugler (Austria), as well as committee members Alessandro Alfieri (Italy), Kristian Klinck (Germany), Malik Ben Achour (Belgium), Kemal Çelik (Türkiye), and Fabrizio Comba (Italy).



In Vienna, OSCE PA Special Representative Zoffili builds new partnerships to fight organized crime

January 30 2024

VIENNA - OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime Eugenio Zoffili (Italy) is in Vienna this week, holding two days of meetings at the OSCE Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations against Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The visit has been an opportunity to assess the current level of threat from organized crime and



identify emerging trends and challenges that demand particular attention. Zoffili, who also serves as Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA, has met with Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE, Ambassador Stefano Baldi, and the Permanent Representative of Italy to International Organizations, Ambassador Debora Lepre, as well as a wide range of officials from the OSCE Secretariat and UNODC.

“Building political momentum and promoting international collaboration is essential to effectively combat the scourge of transnational organized crime”, Zoffili said. “This is why I am working to reinforce relationships and promote synergy between the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE executive structures, and relevant UN bodies at both the operational and political levels.”

At the UNODC today, Special Representative Zoffili discussed the latest drug and human trafficking trends with experts. He talked with UNODC officials about the links between trafficking and terrorism, and learned more about the regional impacts organized crime on Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Underlining the importance of UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime’s new review mechanism, he stressed the key role of parliaments in fighting serious crime.

In discussions, Zoffili underlined the importance of the fight against drug trafficking, in particular, in combating all criminal activities, as it provides criminal organizations to access large amounts of money. Today, he noted, synthetic drugs are easily marketable and are spreading devastating social problems throughout the OSCE area.

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking is also a top priority, he stressed.



Visit of the OSCE PA Special Representative on Combating Organized Crime to the OSCE Secretariat and United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna

January 29-30 2024

On 29-30 January 2024, the OSCE PA Special Representative (SR) on Combating Organized Crime, Hon. Eugenio Zoffili, conducted an official visit to the OSCE Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Joined by the Secretary of the Italian delegation and staff from the OSCE PA Vienna Office, SR Zoffili exchanged views with over 20 experts from both organizations. Ultimately, **the visit proved instrumental in (1) introducing the new mandate of the SR, (2) learning more about the latest organized crime trends and, (3) fostering collaborative efforts among key international actors in the fight against all forms of mafias across the OSCE region.**

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At the OSCE Secretariat, discussions with key departments delved into the comprehensive policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms required to address the complex challenges posed by organized crime. Meetings with the Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and counterparts from the Transnational Threats Department and Office of the Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities allowed for in-depth exchanges on a wide range of organized crime-related challenges and projects.

Meetings in UNODC with the Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, and Terrorism Prevention Branch provided a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of organized crime. The dialogue encompassed discussions on emerging trends, persisting threats and innovative strategies for prevention and repression.



Throughout these interactions, SR Zoffili explored avenues for enhanced co-operation with the aim to **foster effective responses to organized crime** through coherent policies and operational efforts. Emphasis was placed on boosting **policy alignment and information sharing** at international level, as well as promoting targeted joint initiatives addressing human and drugs trafficking, money laundering and migrant smuggling at regional level.

The multifaceted interplay between transnational criminal and terrorist networks was also in focus.

Finally, SR Zoffili actively sought ways to **integrate parliamentary perspectives into the broader strategy**, stressing the pivotal role of legislative bodies in addressing complex challenges associated with organized crime. Deliberations centered around legislative **frameworks, parliamentary engagement, and the role of lawmakers** in reinforcing the international response against organized crime.

The visit concluded with a **debriefing at the OSCE PA Vienna Office**, where the SR had also the opportunity to briefly meet local staff.



Major Organized Crime Trends

Organized crime trends continue to evolve in response to societal changes, technological advancements, and shifts in global dynamics. The illicit drug trade remains a significant driver of organized crime, contributing to the financial strength and operational resilience of criminal organizations worldwide. According to the UNODC 2023 World Drug Report, recent



trends indicate a growing concern, particularly in the realms of Cocaine and synthetic drugs. Particularly alarming is the fact that the production of synthetic drugs is relatively inexpensive, facilitating their widespread availability in illicit markets and subsequently contributing to a surge in demand across the globe.

Money laundering remains a major concern worldwide, with criminal groups always seizing new opportunities to legitimize their unlawful gains. As financial systems become increasingly globalized, the fight against money laundering becomes crucial in disrupting the financial backbone of organized criminal enterprises, emphasizing the need for law enforcement and international organizations to adopt comprehensive and coordinated strategies. **Trafficking in cultural property** is also becoming an important source for the laundering of the proceeds of crime and has been identified as a possible source of financing for terrorist groups.



One significant global trend is the increasing sophistication of organized crime groups, utilizing advanced technology and global networks to facilitate their illicit activities. The convergence of various criminal activities, illustrating a trend where organized crime groups engage in a wide array of illicit enterprises simultaneously, is another prominent trend. Hotspots such as the **Balkan and the Mediterranean regions** are of particular concern, with organized crime exploiting these areas for the trafficking of migrants, drugs, and other

illicit goods. In the Mediterranean region, the convergence of different routes raises significant challenges. Notably, migrant smuggling routes often overlap with drug trafficking routes. Major drug trafficking routes such as those originating from South America and flowing through West Africa into Europe also play a significant role in facilitating the global movement of illicit substances, contributing to the pervasive influence of organized crime.

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It was highlighted that the **nexus between conflict and organized crime** represents a complex and dynamic relationship that demands closer examination. In many instances, conflict zones provide fertile ground for organized crime to flourish, taking advantage of the chaotic environments, weakened governance structures, and the breakdown of social order. The intricate interplay between these two phenomena requires further research to comprehensively understand the mechanisms, dynamics, and impacts on both conflict and crime.

Finally, the growing significance of cybercrime is a major component of organized criminal activities. The digital realm provides criminals with new opportunities to exploit vulnerabilities, conduct financial fraud, and engage in cyber-enabled crimes. This shift towards digital platforms poses unique challenges for traditional law enforcement methods, necessitating the development of advanced technological solutions and international collaboration.

Intersection with Terrorism

The complex nexus between organized crime and terrorist networks was also duly explored during the two-day visit. The discussions delved into the nuanced intersections of this connection that incorporates elements such as financing, operational methodologies and interlinked routes.

Terrorist organizations often engage in organized crime to finance their activities.

Both OSCE and UNODC recognized the importance of disrupting the financial networks supporting terrorism. Collaborative efforts focus on tracking and preventing money laundering, enhancing financial intelligence, and strengthening legal frameworks to counter the convergence of organized crime and terrorism.

The link between terrorism and organized crime is very prominent in Africa, as well as in Afghanistan. UNODC's engagement in the Sahel region extends to comprehensive threat assessments, emphasizing the need for multi-dimensional strategies to prevent violent extremism and enhance the capacities of criminal justice sectors. A critical challenge highlighted was the collection of **battlefield evidence**, an impediment to prosecuting Foreign Terrorist Fighters. While these individuals can be arrested, the lack of sufficient evidence hampers successful prosecutions. Efforts are underway to strengthen the work of different agencies, addressing this challenge and enhancing collaboration between investigators and prosecutors on terrorism and organized crime.

Another notable concern is the **exploitation of trafficking routes by Foreign Terrorist Fighters**, mirroring the patterns observed in the illicit trade of firearms. The interplay between **far-right extremists** and individuals involved in criminal organized groups was also underlined. Additionally, links between **organized crime groups and active sports groups** were discussed, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies to disrupt these connections.



Through workshops, training programs, and technical assistance, both organizations work to enhance the skills of security personnel and strengthen legal frameworks to counter these converging threats. Raising awareness among youth and engaging with civil society are also crucial components of an effective strategy to prevent serious crime.

Key International Efforts

Recent trends and developments in the organized crime landscape have prompted the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to intensify its efforts in understanding and combating various facets of criminal activities.

The Research and Trend Analysis Branch of UNODC conducts research work related to the trends and developments in the organized crime and illicit markets field. In order to monitor global drug cultivation, the UNODC utilizes satellite imagery for data collection. The collation of data on drug use and trafficking enables the construction of a global picture, which results in the annual World Drug Report, providing in-depth analysis of key developments and emerging trends in selected drug markets, including in countries currently experiencing conflict.

UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section reviews the impact of organized crime on vulnerable populations, with a particular focus on human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The exploitation of individuals for forced labor, sexual exploitation, and other criminal purposes remains a grave concern, necessitating concerted efforts to strengthen legal frameworks and enhance international collaboration to combat these crimes. The Branch produces a Global Report on Trafficking in Persons every two years since 2009, utilizing the largest existing database (2). Interviews with migrants in countries of origin and transit, amounting to 10,000 interviews, offer insights into motivations and roots for migration, contributing valuable information for policy responses.

In order to enhance the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols, the State Parties have recently adopted a new Review Mechanism (3) which is a comprehensive and collaborative peer review process, emphasizing transparency, efficiency, inclusivity, and impartiality. Over the course of ten-year timeframe, the process aims to thoroughly assess all articles of the Organized Crime.

Convention and its Protocols, which have been divided into four thematic clusters: Criminalization and Jurisdiction; International Cooperation, Mutual Legal Assistance and Confiscation; Law Enforcement and Judicial System; Prevention, Technical Assistance, Protection Measures and Other Measures. Each state is reviewed for each instrument to which it is party by two other States. Reviewing states provide written feedback, engage in a dialogue with the reviewed state, and collaboratively prepare a list of observations, including gaps, challenges, best practices, suggestions, and technical assistance needs in the organized crime field.



In close co-operation with UNODC, the OSCE is also actively engaged in strengthening the fight against transnational organized crime. The main focus is on enhancing the capabilities of its participating States in combating transnational criminal activities and promoting regional co-operation. These efforts encompass various areas, including law enforcement, judiciary, and border management.

For instance, the OSCE-led extra-budgetary project on “Innovative policy solutions to mitigate money-laundering risks of virtual assets” is designed to support the governments of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in building the capacity of national authorities to mitigate criminal risks related to virtual assets and cryptocurrencies with the help of analytical tracing software. Furthermore, the extra-budgetary project on “Strengthening the fight against transnational organized crime in South-Eastern Europe” aimed at improving regional co-operation in the context of the seizure, confiscation, management and social re-use of assets of criminal organizations.

The organization also supports police forces across its region. It maintains a network of police advisers in its field operations and provides assessments, expert advice, and assistance to participating States to help them develop accountable policing services that protect their citizens.



1 World Drug Report 2023. UNODC. https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/WDR23_Exsum_fin_SP.pdf

2 More information on the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>

3 More information on the UNTOC Review Mechanism:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/overview.html>

Online meeting with Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and the other Special Representatives. At work to ensure safety and combat all forms of crime.

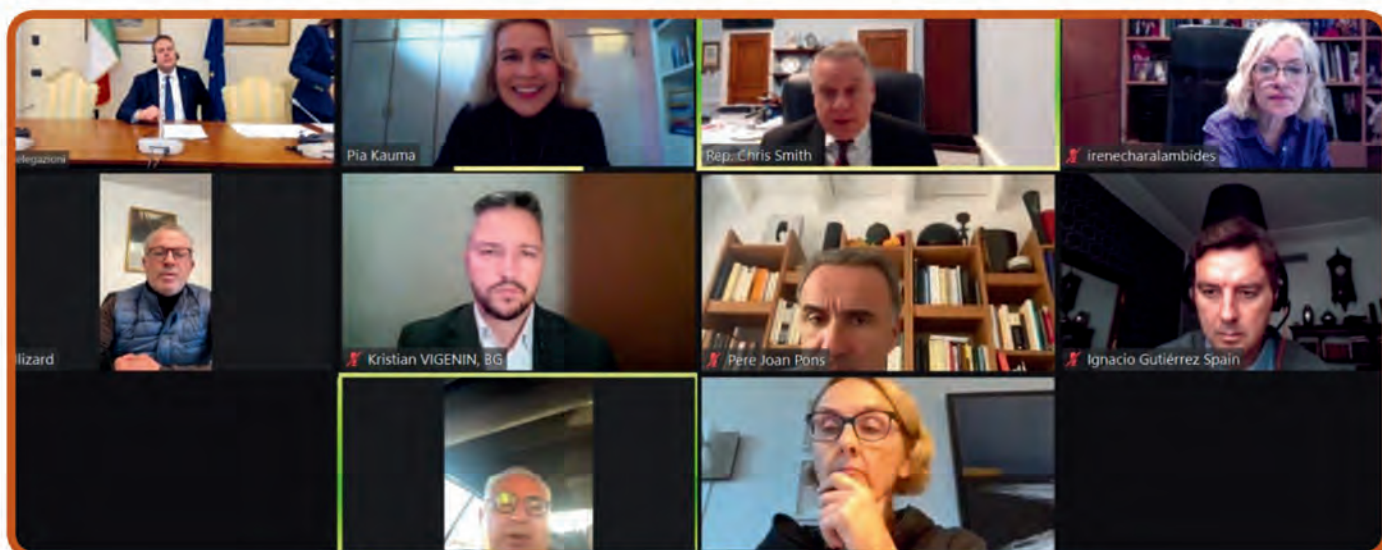
October 20 2023

OSCE PA Special Representatives met on 20 October with future activities to promote peace and co-operation in the OSCE area. Ten Special Representatives took part in the online meeting, discussing work on issues including human trafficking, organized crime, climate change, and fighting corruption. Special Representatives focusing on regions such as South East



Europe, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the South Caucasus also participated in the discussion, highlighting their priorities in the work ahead.

The meeting served as an opportunity to promote synergy in the work of the Special Representatives and to minimize duplication, as well as how to best complement the work of the PA's committees.



Eugenio Zoffili has met Interior Minister Piantedosi and has introduced the fight against drugs and mafias into the OSCE debate

October 6 2023

"Yesterday I met the Italian Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, at the Ministry, where we discussed several topics in relation to my work at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, notably in my capacity as Special Representative on combating transnational organised crime and mafias. I am in total agreement with the Minister on all fronts, especially on combating drug-trafficking, which is one of the main sources of finance for criminal gangs. Drugs not only undermine public security but are also ready cash and a source of revenue for mafia-style gangs; crushing these criminal activities means shutting off the taps that are draining rivers of money into the coffers of these criminal gangs. This is why, as I explained to Interior Minister Piantedosi, I have decided to fully execute the remit entrusted to me by President Pia Kauma by bringing the war on drugs into the OSCE debate, which is a fundamental and indispensable tool for stopping organised crime and mafias."





**MORE
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