Southeast European Law Enforcement Center

Annual Report 2016
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Foreword
On 7th of October 2016, SELEC marked its fifth year of coordinated efforts towards the improvement and further enhancement of the mechanism of interaction among law enforcement authorities of its twelve Member States. On this date, in 2011, SECI Center’s experience and good practices accumulated during its 12 years of existence were transferred to SELEC.

Throughout the years, SELEC has diversified and enlarged its area of expertise and intensified the efforts in preventing and countering trans-border organized crime in the Southeast European region, nowadays covering crimes such as trafficking in human beings, illegal migration, drug trafficking, fraud and smuggling, terrorism, cybercrime, container security, stolen vehicles, environment and nature related crimes, a/o.

The increasing number of exchanges of information, joint investigations and regional operations conducted by the Member States within SELEC’s framework stand as a proof that the Center has been able to provide effective support and prompt response to the Member States’ Police and Customs authorities in the fight against transnational organized crime.

The excellent results achieved could not be obtained without the support and dedication of the law enforcement institutions of our Member States, National Focal Points, Liaison Officers, Staff, as well as our Partners.

Our strength is owed to the constant commitment of the Member States in achieving the common objective of preventing and combating serious and organized crime in Southeastern Europe, a sine qua non condition for sustainable development and making the region more secure.

TONI JAKIMOVSKI
Director General of SELEC
What is SELEC?

The Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) is an international law enforcement organization established to provide support to its Member States and to enhance the coordination in preventing and combating crime, including transnational serious and organized crime.

The founding document of SELEC is the Convention of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center that entered into force in 2011. As the successor of SECI Center, founded in 1999, SELEC inherits the vast expertise in successfully coordinating joint investigations and regional operations, and in facilitating the swift exchange of information and requests of assistance.

Thus on 7th of October 2016, SELEC celebrated its fifth year of coordinated efforts of both Police and Customs’ authorities of its twelve Member States in their fight against trans-border organized crime.

SELEC Headquarters

SELEC Headquarters is based in Bucharest, Romania, within the Parliament Palace. SELEC concluded with the host country the Headquarters Agreement that refers to the support related to the status, administration, logistics and security, necessary for the efficient functioning of the Center.

Member States

The Member States of SELEC, parties to the Convention of the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center, are:

- Republic of Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Republic of Bulgaria
- Republic of Croatia
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Hellenic Republic
- Hungary
- Republic of Moldova
- Montenegro
- Romania
- Republic of Serbia
- Republic of Turkey
SELEC Structure

The Council is the highest decision-making body of SELEC, comprising of high-level representatives of SELEC Member States.

The Council Chairmanship changes annually, based on an alphabetical rotation procedure. In 2016, the Chairmanship belonged to Republic of Moldova, whilst the Vice-Chairmanship to The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Management of SELEC consists of:
- Director General
- Director for Operations
- Director for Legal and Internal Affairs

The Member States appoint Liaison Officers from Police and Customs to work at the Headquarters of SELEC, as they are the direct link with the national law enforcement authorities.

The activity of the Liaison Officers is supported by the National Focal Points set up in each Member State.

Internship

SELEC internship programme provides an insight into how an international organization operates, thus giving the opportunity to applicants to experience working in a multicultural environment, to have a better understanding about the organization’s activities and to put in practice their acquired knowledges.

Task Forces

SELEC’s operational activities are conducted within the framework of 8 Task Forces addressing crimes such as trafficking in human beings, illegal migration, drug trafficking, terrorism, cybercrime, container security, fraud, stolen vehicles, environment and nature related crimes.

The Task Forces are coordinated by the Member States, through the Task Force Coordinator, and the Liaison Officers posted at SELEC act as Task Force Managers.
Partnership with SELEC

Cooperation with SELEC is available to any state or international organization or body which has an interest in law enforcement cooperation in the Southeast European region. The SELEC Convention provides two possibilities of establishing partnerships with SELEC, namely as Operational Partner or Observer.

The Operational Partner status grants the right to exchange personal data, to participate in all SELEC meetings and activities, including operational meetings, and to post a representative at the SELEC Headquarters with the purpose of implementing the cooperation agreement concluded between SELEC and the respective Operational Partner.

Operational Partners

- INTERPOL
- Italy
- USA

Observers

- Austria
- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- EUBAM
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- IOM
- Israel
- Japan
- The Netherlands
- Slovak Republic
- Spain
- UK
- Ukraine
- UNmiK
- UNODC
- WCO

International Cooperation

Besides the successful cooperation among the Member States under SELEC’s auspices, one of SELEC’s priorities in 2016 was broadening the cooperation with other countries, organizations and bodies so as to have a synergic approach in preventing and combating organized crime.

During 2016 the process of enlarging the law enforcement cooperation at operational level continued with new requests for the Operational Partner status with SELEC.

Apart from the cooperation through the status of Operational Partner or Observer, SELEC has other partnerships established in the framework of agreements, memoranda of understanding, letters of intent, a/o.

Therefore, in 2016, Letters of Intent for cooperation were concluded with The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime and with Phillip Morris International.
Trainings

Continuous learning is essential for law enforcement at all levels. SELEC empowers its Member States’ Police and Customs by providing participation in tailored trainings, such as:

- Training session Deployment and Use of Undercover Investigators in Narcotics Cases
- Training seminar Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Investigations
- Transnational Training Seminar on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Organized Crime
- Training course on Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement
- Firearms Western Balkans course

Projects

In the framework of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), SELEC developed the project “Countering Trafficking in Persons”. Having SELEC as the Lead Partner and Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia and Romania, as Project Partners, the project envisaged elaborating the Reports on Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, strengthening the regional mechanism for investigating these crimes, exercise the information exchange, planning joint investigations and regional operations in this field, and organizing an expert Conference on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Migrants Smuggling.

Events

2016 marked SELEC’s 5th anniversary which was celebrated during the 13th Council session, high representatives of SELEC Member States and Partners attending the event. SELEC’s achievements during 2011-2016, as well as an outlook for the future development of the Center were highlighted.

Besides the bi-annual Council sessions, the operational and Task Force meetings, SELEC also organizes the annual External Audit of its financial records, as well as the meetings of the Financial Consultative Group, consisting in experts nominated by SELEC Member States that advise on budgetary matters.

It’s worth mentioning that the fully-equipped training center of SELEC hosts various trainings and meetings organized by SELEC and/or its Partners.
Chapter 2
Operational Activities
Under SELEC’s umbrella, 8 Task Force meetings were organized in 2016 within the fields of priorities, providing forums for discussions for experts from SELEC Member States and partner countries and organizations. Moreover, during the Task Force meetings, the experts have the opportunity to share good practices and challenges, to evaluate the activities conducted and to decide upon further steps to be taken at regional level, as part of a common and more efficient endeavor for better tackling trans-border organized crime.

SELEC Task Forces are:

- Task Force Mirage on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration
- Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force
- Financial and Computer Crime Task Force
- Stolen Vehicles Task Force
- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force
- Anti-Terrorism Task Force
- Container Security Task Force
- Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force

The total of 23,967 exchanges of requests and information recorded in 2016 represent a slight increase comparing with the previous year, as it can be noticed in the chart herewith.

During 2016, most of the requests and information shared through SELEC channel were related to smuggling and customs frauds (42%), drug trafficking (23%), and illegal migration (7%).

The Liaison Officers posted at SELEC facilitate the rapid exchange of information and requests of assistance, being the direct link with the national law enforcement authorities.

The information flow in SELEC is depicted in the below diagram:

Any request or information sent by an investigative team must be addressed to the National Focal Point (NFP), as the single point of contact in the Member State for communications with SELEC, which must redirect it to its Liaison Officer (LO) posted at SELEC Headquarters. All information exchanges or requests of assistance follow this pattern. The support of SELEC’s Analytical Unit can be requested in any stage of this process.
Joint Investigations

Throughout 2016, SELEC continued to provide tailored operational support to its Member States in investigating active organized criminal groups operating in the region, 101 joint investigations being carried out last year under SELEC’s coordination. The joint investigations coordinated by SELEC, aiming to tackle trans-border organized crime in the Southeast European region, are initiated upon the proposal made by the Liaison Officers.

In 2016 most of the joint investigations were carried out under the Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force (45%), followed by Mirage Task Force (22%) and Financial and Computer Crime Task Force (13%).

Regional Operations

Regional Operations are representing a key segment in the activity of SELEC and Member States’ law enforcements agencies. SELEC, together with the Member States and its Partners, initiated and/or further developed in 2016 four regional operations, namely:

- **Operation ECLIPSE** - targeting smuggling of cigarettes, raw and smoking tobacco
- **Operation KNOW-HOW 2** - targeting counterfeit goods
- **Operation MIRAGE** - targeting illegal migration and smuggling of migrants
- **Operation ORION 3** - targeting illegal hunting and trafficking of endangered and protected animals

Compared with 2015, it was registered a significant increase in terms of information exchanges during Regional Operations, namely by 131%.

Analytical Products

Strategic analysis, as the core business of SELEC’s analytical activities, present an early warning of threats and a wide-range overview on different crime areas in Southeast Europe, in order to support stakeholders in better understanding the situation at regional and international level and take the necessary measures so as to be prepared to deal with emerging crimes.


14 such analytical products were developed by the Analytical Unit of SELEC in 2016.

The most comprehensive product developed by SELEC is the Organized Crime Threat Assessment for the Southeast European Region (OCTA SEE) which represents an instrument for decision-makers in setting up common strategies in combating transnational organized crime.

The preparation process for the next OCTA SEE, covering the period 2013-2016, started with the development and dissemination of the questionnaires on criminal activities, organized criminal groups and money laundering.
Bi-annual Awards

One of the programmes developed and implemented by SELEC is the Bi-Annual Awards, destined to encourage, motivate and appreciate the professionalism of the law enforcement authorities of SELEC Member States, the programme being a recognition of their efforts in concluding successful operations, with SELEC support. In 2016, 14 joint investigations developed by the Member States were awarded through this programme.

Capabilities

Analysis, including intelligence requirements, collecting, processing, validating, disseminating, as the basis of the intelligence led policing, is an indispensable component of the operational activities within SELEC.

The main responsibility of SELEC’s Analytical Unit is elaborating analytical reports in order to support the activities of the SELEC Task Forces, drafting threat assessments in relation to organized crime, as well as evaluation reports of regional operations. Moreover, the Analytical Unit is providing operational analytical support to the Member States during regional operations and joint investigations.

The effective management of the operational activities is performed by the Operational Planning, Coordination and Support Unit which is responsible for planning and organizing operational activities, supporting the preparation of plans for regional operations and joint investigations, assisting the development and implementation of international projects, collecting the national reports necessary for drafting the analytical products, providing support to the Liaison Officers, and liaising with the member countries’ authorities.

The Center provides a venue for the member countries to exchange, in a timely manner, operational information, through SELEC’s communication channel, as well as to coordinate joint investigations and regional operations in Southeast Europe. The secure information exchange network enable the swift exchange of information among SELEC Member States and Partners.
SEEPAG

Under SELEC's auspices is functioning the Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEEPAG), the prosecutorial network established in 2003 by the SELEC Member States in order to complement the work of the law enforcement authorities in Southeast Europe.

SEEPAG has regular conferences gathering the twelve SEEPAG Members, namely the prosecutors nominated as the national contact points, as well as the representatives of the prosecution offices of SELEC partner countries, and experts from European Judicial Network, Regional Cooperation Council, a/o.

Under the Montenegrin Chairmanship of SEEPAG, in 2016 the SEEPAG Conference focused on practical discussions related to the Joint Investigations Teams and the ways to better develop this useful tool in order to tackle trans-border organized crime in the SELEC region.
Chapter 3

Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration
Task Force Meeting on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration

The Task Force Mirage on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, coordinated by Romania, was established in 2000.

The 23rd meeting of the Task Force on Countering Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration was held in Bucharest, Romania on 25 – 26 of May 2016, in the framework of the project “Countering Trafficking in Persons”. Representatives of SELEC Member States and of EUBAM, Europol, IOM, Italy, Netherlands, OSCE, Spain, Ukraine, UK and USA attended the meeting.

The aim of the Conference was to provide a forum in which experts can discuss regional approaches in preventing and countering trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants and share their challenges and good practices, overall aiming at strengthening the cooperation and set the common directions to be followed at regional level.

During the meeting, the Evaluation Report of Operation MIRAGE 2015, as well as the key findings of the 2015 Report on Illegal Migration in Southeast Europe and the Report on Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeast Europe were presented.

The final results of the joint investigations developed by the Member States in 2015 and awarded by SELEC were also assessed, new trends, modus operandi, routes, investigative methods, and successful cases being discussed by the participants.

Report on Trafficking in Human Beings in Southeast Europe for 2015

Although the number of victims of trafficking in human beings is following a descending trend since 2013, trafficking in human beings remains an important concern when referring to the trans-border organized crime in Southeastern Europe.

The main forms of trafficking vary from one country to another, but also in terms of internal or external dimension of exploitation, placing on top the sexual exploitation, but also labor exploitation or forced begging for trans-border trafficking, while internally, sexual exploitation remains the main form of exploitation.

The key findings of the Report are:

| 893 investigations of trafficking in human beings initiated in 2015; 588 international investigations reported by the Member States |
| A total number of 859 persons were charged/prosecuted and 334 persons were convicted for trafficking in human beings in SELEC Member States |
| 2,001 victims identified in 2015 |
| 68% from the total number of identified victims were adults and 26% were minors |
| 62% of the national victims exploited domestically were minors and 38% adults; 92% of the total national victims exploited abroad were adults and 8% were minors |
| 71% of the foreign citizens exploited in the reporting country were adults and 29% minors |
| Victims of trafficking in human beings, citizens of SELEC Member States, were mainly exploited in Germany, Italy and Austria |
| 55% of the adult victims were sexually exploited, 37% labor exploited, 7% exploited for street crimes and 1% exploited for tissue and organs harvesting |
| 77% of the minors victims of trafficking in human beings were sexually exploited, 12% were exploited for labor, 10% for street crimes and 1% for child pornography |
| The organized criminal groups specialized in trafficking in human beings are generally based on common ethnic or regional affiliation, family or friendship connections and, generally, by their common financial interests |
Report on Illegal Migration in Southeast Europe for 2015

In 2015, SELEC Member States reported an unprecedented number of detections of illegal migrants. As a consequence, an increased number of asylum seekers was recorded and a profitable opportunity arose for the organized criminal groups, which developed and diversified the facilitation “services”.

The key findings of the Report are:

- 2,126,326 detections of illegal migrants were reported by the law enforcement authorities in SELEC Member States
- 95% from the total number of detections were made at the borders of SELEC Member States and 5% inland
- The highest figures of migrants corresponded to citizens of Syria and Afghanistan
- The number of asylum applications in SELEC Member States had almost doubled in comparison with the previous year; the biggest number of asylum applicants reported being made by nationals of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan
- 9,252 migrant smugglers were charged or prosecuted, and 1,578 migrant smugglers were convicted by SELEC Member States authorities in 2015
- The biggest number of migrant smugglers for citizens of countries outside the region was reported for citizens of Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Organized criminal groups involved in smuggling of migrants investigated in SELEC Member States are characterized by high flexibility, complex structure and defined roles for each member
- Southeast Europe remains a transit area for illegal migrants on their way to Western Europe
- Due to geographical position, in 2015 Hellenic Republic and Republic of Turkey appeared to be the main entry gates in the region, whilst Hungary remained the main exit country


Operation MIRAGE, targeting illegal migration and smuggling of migrants in Southeastern Europe, was developed in the second part of 2015, for a period of 6 days, between 2-7 of November.

High level participation was committed, as all SELEC Member States participated and allocated resources within the timeframe of the Operation. At least 6,178 personnel and 136 border crossing points were involved in the activities conducted by the Member States during Operation MIRAGE.

- 779 pieces of information were exchanged among SELEC Member States
- 124 migrant smugglers were investigated
- 57,338 illegal migrants were detected by SELEC Member States
- The highest figures of migrants detected in Southeastern Europe during the timeframe of the Operation corresponded to citizens of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq
- Most illegal migrants identified were adults between the age of 18 - 25 years, followed by those between the age of 25 - 35 and those between 10 to 18 years old
- 97% from the total number of detections of illegal migrants were made inland, 1% of the detections were made at the border crossing points and 2% at the green/blue border
- 32,507 migrants detected used the railway, 461 used maritime/river type of transportation, 4 detections were made in airports and 176 migrants were detected while using vehicles
- Use of different types of false documents such as identity cards, passports or visas was identified as a modus operandi; use of UN refugee cards was reported as a new trend in this regard
Joint Investigations

A total number of 25 joint investigations were supported by SELEC in 2016 under the umbrella of the Mirage Task Force.

Joint investigation KABATAS targeted an organized criminal group based in Istanbul, dealing with migrant smuggling. Partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Slovenia, linked to this organized criminal group, supported the illegal border crossing of Turkish nationals along the Western Balkans countries, taking advantage of the free visa regime applicable in these countries, in order to reach Western Europe. 168 migrants and 11 persons suspected for “producing or arranging forged documents” and for “migrants’ smuggling” were apprehended during the 32 actions that took place at national and international level. Most of the detained Turkish migrants were wanted, as being involved in various factions of idiosyncratic terrorist organizations.
Joint investigation **TAKSIM** involved the Bulgarian and Turkish law enforcement authorities and targeted dismantling an organized criminal group involved in illegal migration. 4 traffickers and 99 migrants, originating from Syria, Iraq and Bangladesh, were apprehended while attempting to cross illegally, by boat, the Aegean sea, heading towards Hellenic Republic.

Joint investigation **RIVA**, a case in the field of migrants’ smuggling, involving the competent authorities from The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Turkey. The joint investigation led to the arrest of 30 suspects (including the leaders), while 197 migrants were rescued and 1,100 passports belonging to different European countries, printers, scanners and various materials for preparing forged documents were seized. Part of the perpetrators were suspected of being involved in terrorist activities.

Joint investigation **THE PACK** involved the Bulgarian and Serbian law enforcement authorities and targeted an organized criminal group dealing with illegal migration. The migrants, having Afghan origins and heading towards Western Europe countries, were captured at the Bulgarian/Serbian border.

The joint investigation succeeded with the arrest of 5 traffickers and 26 migrants, and seizure of 8 vehicles used for smuggling.
Chapter 4

Drug Trafficking
Task Force Meeting on Anti-Drug Trafficking

The Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force, coordinated by Republic of Bulgaria, was established in 2000.

During 14 - 15 of June 2016, with EUSDR financial support, the 22nd Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force meeting was held in Bucharest, Romania, with the participation of representatives of SELEC Member States and Partners such as EUBAM, Europol, France, Germany, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, INTERPOL, Israel, OSCE, Spain, USA, as well as from the private sector.

The draft Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe for 2015 was presented, introducing the methodology and the analysis results for different types of drugs, presenting also characteristics of the organized criminal groups, and carried out controlled deliveries.

Representatives of the Member States delivered presentations on interesting cases in the field of countering drug trafficking, introducing also the current situation at national level in terms of actions taken, statistical data, trends and steps to be taken. Increase of KHAT seizures, increase of smuggling of medicines containing drugs, increase of cannabis cultivations in the countries and also increased use of the northern Black Sea route for heroin transport were the main trends underlined by the participants.

In the framework of this Task Force, SELEC - OSCE Manual on Controlled Deliveries was updated and disseminated to the Member States. The process of updating the Manual entailed gathering updated information from all the Member States, followed by the integration of the up-to-date data into one unique manual. The Manual helps improving the cooperation by providing practitioners with contact details of authorizing persons in neighboring countries, an overview of legislation, general and specific conditions for requesting a controlled delivery and other useful information.

Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe for 2015

The Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe for 2015 has been prepared in order to provide a wide-ranging overview on the drugs situation in Southeast Europe and to support the competent law enforcement authorities in completing the overview of the situation at regional level.

The Report represents an enlarged and compiled review of the drug trafficking situation, trends and routes, as includes data about the markets and the demand, with a focus on Southeast Europe. Well-structured, the Report provides clear data and information on the main characteristics of this type of crime.

The key findings of the Report are:

Opium-Based Drugs/Heroin

- The opium-based drugs (including opium, heroin and morphine) seized in Southeast Europe weighted more than 10.5 tons
- In terms of quantities, opiates recorded the lowest level in the past four years
- Opiates detained decreased by 37.4%
- Heroin represented 94.2% of the total quantity of opiates, being the most important opium-based drug smuggled in the region
- Heroin considerably dropped by 40.2%, with almost 6.7 tons
- Changes in the heroin supply in Southeast Europe were registered
- The Northern branch of the Balkan route - but highly connected with Northern Black Sea route - seriously increased in importance
- Opium-based drugs transported mainly by land vehicles
- 72.5% of total amount of seized drugs is related to lorries and 22.3% to passenger cars
- 60.2% of total quantity seized was based on intelligence and 26.8% on risk analysis
- The estimated value of the seized heroin: around 400 million Euro
Cannabis

- Cannabis is the most commonly produced, used and trafficked illicit drug in the region.
- The total amount of seized cannabis products (marijuana and hashish) - almost 72 tons. This represents a decline by 71.2%, being the lowest level recorded in the past 5 years.
- Marijuana - 63.7 tons – serious decline by 73.2%.
- Hashish – 8.2 tons - decrease by 31.4%.
- At regional level, transported by lorries: 60.6%.
- Seized marijuana: 43.9% based on intelligence and 42.6% on risk analysis.
- Southeast Europe – transit area for hashish with destination Russian Federation.
- The estimated value of marijuana seized is around 650 million Euro and of hashish is around 130 million Euro.

Cocaine

- Cocaine smuggled from South America producers.
- The cocaine seized in 2015 amounts 877.210 kilograms.
- For the second year in a row, cocaine decreased (by 16.4% in 2015).
- 70 kilograms of “black” cocaine were seized.
- 95.4% of the seized quantity was based on intelligence.
- 74.2% of the quantities are directly related to maritime transport.
- The estimated value of the seized cocaine: about 75 million Euro.

Synthetic Drugs

The following quantities of synthetic drugs were seized:

- Amphetamine - 115.730 kilograms.
- Ecstasy - 1,930.886 kilograms.
- Methamphetamine - 261.834 kilograms.

Other Drugs

- New Psychoactive Substances – more present in the region.
- In the last three years, a new player in the region: KHAT.
- Ethiopia is the main departure country for KHAT that is reaching this region.

Organized Criminal Groups (OCG)

- 15% of the members of the dismantled OCGs are foreign citizens (mainly from neighboring countries).
- 15% of the dismantled OCGs were multi-drug type.
Joint Investigations

In 2016 SELEC was involved in the coordination of 44 joint investigations in the framework of the Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force.

**Joint investigation MORNING STAR**, a case between Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Turkey initiated in 2016 and targeting an organized criminal group dealing with heroin trafficking. A quantity of 62 kg of heroin was seized by Istanbul Narcotic Police Department in an operation following a SELEC-coordinated process between Bulgarian and Turkish Police authorities. The members of the organized criminal network involved in the case were arrested (3 persons). SELEC supported this investigation by facilitating the swift exchange of information and by providing operational assistance.

**Joint investigation MORNING STAR 2** involved the competent authorities from Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Turkey and targeted an organized criminal group dealing with drug trafficking from Republic of Turkey, via Republic of Bulgaria, to Western Europe countries. The joint investigation resulted in the seizure of 80 kg of heroin hidden in two suitcases in a trunk of a vehicle, in value of 1,5 million Euro. Following this operation, two traffickers were apprehended and 3 other suspects arrested.

**Joint investigation TRUCKS/CANNABIS**, an operation developed between Republic of Bulgaria and Hellenic Republic, initiated in 2015 in connection with the information exchanges done through SELEC and identified *modus operandi* for trafficking of big quantities of different drugs (predominantly cannabis, but also cocaine). Trucks registered in Republic of Bulgaria belonging to companies registered by Greek citizens were used for the drug traffic. Several seizures of big quantities of drugs (marijuana – over 3 tones and cocaine – over 50 kg) were made in different countries (Republic of Bulgaria, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Serbia, Hungary, UK, Germany etc). Case succeeded with the arrest of 16 persons.
Joint investigation TRIK-ROBA involved the competent authorities from Montenegro and Republic of Serbia and targeted dismantling an organized criminal group dealing with smuggling of different kind of drugs throughout the region and further. The operation resulted in 22 people arrested, 14 connected seizures in the operational timeframe, 1223 kg marijuana, 2.15 kg of heroin, 3.6 kg of Ecstasy, 1 kg of hashish, 1.6 kg of amphetamines, 500 gr of MDMA-Kristal, 23.30 grams of cocaine, 3 kg of special mixture for heroin and almost 2500 pieces of drug pills.

Joint investigation BALKAN involved the law enforcement authorities of Republic of Albania, Republic of Bulgaria, Hellenic Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey and targeted an organized criminal group dealing with drug trafficking (heroin, cocaine and marijuana). The heroin was trafficked from Republic of Turkey to Republic of Albania with final destination the European Union countries. Marijuana was acquired in Republic of Albania and transported to The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hellenic Republic and Republic of Turkey. The case succeeded with 28 persons arrested including the organizers, arrest warrants issued for 13 persons and seizure of 26,684 kg heroin, 1.8 kg cocaine and 183.62 kg marijuana, 38,315 Euro, 1.5 million Leke, 4 weapons, 7 vehicles and 68 mobile phones.

Joint investigation ODZA between Republic of Bulgaria and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia targeted an organized criminal group dealing with drug trafficking. The investigation succeeded with 108 kg marijuana seized in value of 500,000 Euro and 4 persons being arrested.
Task Force Meeting on Financial and Computer Crime

The Financial and Computer Crime Task Force, coordinated by The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was established in 2001, and has the following sub-groups:

- **Credit card fraud**, coordinated by Romania
- **Cybercrime**, coordinated by Romania
- **Money laundering**, coordinated by Republic of Moldova
- **Intellectual property**, coordinated by Republic of Bulgaria
- **Counterfeit currency**, coordinated by The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The Financial and Computer Crime Task Force regional meeting was held on 13 – 14 of October 2016 in Ohrid/ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with the participation of representatives from SELEC Member States and from the private sector. Representatives of the member countries provided case examples and delivered presentations on computer crimes with a focus on e-commerce and computer frauds, introducing the agencies acting in this field, their structure and competencies, the legislation in force, statistics on results and trends, a/o.

Malware, Ransom-ware, Dark-net, virtual currency, financial mulles, online child exploitation, various types of Internet frauds (lotteries, scholarships, Simbox frauds, Facebook Contact List Fraud, a/o) are some of the modes of manifestation of these crimes, countering them needing inter-agency and international cooperation but also private-public partnership.

During the meeting enhancing cooperation and developing private/public sector partnership emerged as an imperative direction.

Joint Investigations

A total number of 14 joint investigations were supported by SELEC in 2016 under the umbrella of the Financial and Computer Crime Task Force.

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**Joint investigation RED COAST** developed by the competent authorities of Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, initiated in 2016, targeted an organized criminal group dealing with cyber criminality by infecting computers of several private companies with a virus with the intent to illicitly carry out financial transactions from the accounts of the victims to third parties. The case succeeded with the arrest of 10 persons and seizure of 32 electronic skimming devices, laptops, mobile phones, payment cards a/o.

**Joint investigation MONEY MULLES** between Republic of Moldova and Romania targeted an organized criminal group consisting in Moldovan, Romanian and Ukrainian nationals, dealing with cybercrime. The *modus operandi* of the group consisted in organizing a network of “mulles” (persons with double citizenship) that received the money from illegal transactions, as result of cyber-frauds committed by suspects from Russian Federation and Ukraine, in accounts opened in EU countries, withdraw the money and transport it, in cash, to Republic of Moldova in order to be distributed to the higher level members of the organized criminal group. The estimated damages were in value of 6 million Euro. Following simultaneous actions, 19 persons were taken in custody and a large quantity of evidence was seized.
Task Force Meeting on Stolen Vehicles

The Stolen Vehicles Task Force, coordinated by Hungary, was established in 2002.

The 13th meeting of the Stolen Vehicles Task Force was held on the 8th of November 2016 at SELEC premises in Bucharest, Romania. Representatives of all SELEC Member States and several partners attended the meeting.

During the event were presented the main operational results of the activities performed within this Task Force as well as two analytical reports, namely the Situational Report on Vehicle Crime in SELEC Member States for 2012 – 2015 and the Evaluation Report of Operation HIT II - Blue Amber.

Situational report on Vehicle Crime in SELEC Member States for 2012 – 2015

Over the year 2015, SELEC Member States continued to represent a source, transit and destination area for stolen vehicles.

The Report provides an overview of the situation of stolen vehicles in the Southeastern part of Europe, representing a support to the competent law enforcement authorities in order to better understand this phenomenon.

The key findings of the Report are:

- Vehicles subject of a crime in the Southeast European region:
  - In 2012 - 62,378 vehicles
  - In 2013 - 57,304 vehicles
  - In 2014 - 61,086 vehicles
  - In 2015 - 56,572 vehicles

- The estimated value of the vehicles subject of a crime in the region:
  - 623,780,000 Euro in 2012
  - 573,040,000 Euro in 2013
  - 610,860,000 Euro in 2014
  - 565,720,000 Euro in 2015

- The proportion of different types of vehicles subject of a crime:
  - In 2015, the percentage of the cars decreased to 56%; the percentage of motorbikes rose (34%), while the percentage of trucks also dropped (9%) in 2015.
  - Theft was the main method to misappropriate a vehicle in the region over the period from 2012 to 2015 (90% in 2012, 89% in 2013, 95% in 2014 and 84% of total in 2015)

- Vehicles recovered in SELEC region:
  - In 2012 - 22,732 vehicles (36.4% recovered by the authorities)
  - In 2013 - 21,455 vehicles (37% recovered by the authorities)
  - In 2014 - 29,093 vehicles (48% recovered by the authorities)
  - In 2015 - 20,015 vehicles (35% recovered by the authorities)

Evaluation Report of Operation HIT II – Blue Amber

Operation HIT II – Blue Amber primarily focused on combating illicit trafficking of vehicles acquired mostly (but not only) in Western Europe (EU), by committing various types of criminal offences in order to later have them legalized in SELEC Member States or, via SELEC Member States, in other countries of Europe and Asia. The Operation was carried out between 1 - 3 June 2015 with the participation of SELEC and Europol Member States, and other partners.

The Evaluation Report of Operation HIT II – Blue Amber coordinated by SELEC and Europol contains the aims and objectives, participants, communication channels and levels of communication, and main outcomes of the Operation in terms of vehicles, persons and documents checked, seized vehicles, place of detection, citizenship of the offenders a/o.
Joint Investigations

Joint investigation ROVER developed among Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, targeted an organized criminal group dealing with smuggling of stolen vehicles and other criminal acts connected with motor vehicles. 11 persons were arrested, for 7 being issued arrest warrant. In Republic of Albania were seized 21 vehicles and in Montenegro other 28 vehicles. The national search warrants were issued for additional 8 vehicles, and as a result of intensified controls started in course of this operation other 16 high-classes vehicle were seized on Montenegrin border crossing points.

The key findings of the Evaluation Report are:

- Personnel deployed during the Operation: at least 8,604
- 105,081 checked vehicles, 102,544 checked persons and 114,124 checked documents
- Regarding vehicle checks, 2,961 positive hits encountered in the ASF, a number of 35 hits in SIS and 1,759 in the national databases

**Seized/detained vehicles by manufacturer**
- 104 vehicles seized/detained during the Operation
- The three most seized brands of vehicles were BMW, Audi and Mercedes

**Offences**
- Regarding type of offences, theft ranked first, followed by vehicles with altered identification marks and forged document(s) presented
- Five (5) cases of financial frauds were encountered

**Country of offence**
- The most indicated country of offence from outside SELEC region was Italy
- In 43% of the cases, reporting countries indicated as country of offence a state from outside SELEC region and 43% where the country of offence was a Member State of SELEC; in 14% of the cases this type of information was not available

**Estimated value of seized vehicles**
- The estimated value of the seized vehicles by SELEC Member States: 1,101,500 Euro
- The estimated value of the seized vehicles by all the reporting participants: 1,536,703 Euro
Chapter 7
Fraud and Smuggling
Task Force Meeting on Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling

The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force, coordinated by Republic of Albania and Republic of Croatia, was established in 2003.

The 16th meeting of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force was held on 27-28 of September 2016 in Bucharest, Romania. Representatives of SELEC Member States and of EUBAM, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and USA attended the meeting. Private sector was also represented in an open session of the meeting.

During the meeting, the 2015 Annual Report on the Situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling in Southeast Europe was presented, introducing the aim of the report, covered areas, methodology used for preparing the document and the analysis results in terms of cigarettes seizures and trends in cigarettes smuggling, seizures of smoking tobacco and of raw tobacco, location of seizures, reasons for control, means of transport, concealment, cover loads, brands of cigarettes seized, authentication, countries of departure/transit, routes and offenders.

The Evaluation Report of Operation KNOW-HOW and Operation ECLIPSE were also presented.

2015 Annual Report on the Situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling in Southeast Europe

Over the period under analysis, year 2015, all 12 Member States of SELEC seized close to 4.5 billion cigarettes, this representing an increase with 11% compared to the level recorded in 2014.

The amount of cigarettes represents the sum of all quantities seized in a number of 41,574 cases. Compared to the number of cases registered in 2014 by SELEC Member States, in 2015 there was a decrease with 36%.

In 2015, the total quantity of smoking tobacco summed up to 350 tons, an increase of 86% compared to the previous year when 188 tons of smoking tobacco were seized.

The total amount of raw tobacco seized in 2015 in the SELEC region reached close to 330 tons, almost double from the amount recorded in the previous year. Over the same period, the number of reported seizures went up sharply from 209 in 2014 to 2,257 in 2015, marking an increase above ten-fold.

The cigarettes seized at border crossing points represented 75% of the total, followed by inland with 20%, while cigarettes seized at the green border of the reporting country represented slightly more than 5% of the total.
Analysis Report of the Operation KNOW-HOW

Regional Operation KNOW-HOW was carried out in November 2015 with the participation of all Member States.

The aim of the Operation was the detection and detention of counterfeit goods entering SELEC member countries both in commercial and non-commercial consignments transported by all means of transport (air, postal traffic, road, railway, sea, etc), with special focus on counterfeit pharmaceutical products, smuggled by express mail or postal parcels. The Operation required intensive exchange of information which lead to selection and identification of high risk consignments.

The Analysis Report of Operation KNOW-HOW is based on the analysis of 109 cases of detecting goods infringing intellectual property rights of globally-known brands. The analysis was performed in particular with respect to places of seizures, methods of concealment, countries of departure and destination, means of conveyance used, etc.

The largest number of seizures was reported by Republic of Bulgaria, Hellenic Republic and Hungary. These three Member States comprised of close to three quarters of the total number of seizures reported during the Operation.

Regional Operation KNOW-HOW 2

The aim of Operation KNOW-HOW 2, developed during 7-18 of November 2016, was the detection and detention of counterfeit goods entering SELEC Member Countries both in commercial and non-commercial consignments transported by all means of transport (air, postal traffic, road, railway, sea, etc).

Attention was paid to pharmaceutical products, perfumes, sunglasses, clothing & accessories, watches, mobile phones & accessories (air and postal traffic), while in sea traffic typical goods transported in container traffic (footwear, clothing, toys, bags, etc).

The results of the Operation will be presented for endorsement by SELEC Member States at the next Task Force meeting to be held in 2017.

Analysis Report of the Operation ECLIPSE

Over the 10 days’ operational phase of Regional Operation ECLIPSE, from 7-18 March 2016, 127 seizures were reported, totaling roughly 81 million pieces of cigarettes estimated at more than 10 million Euro, 178 kg of cut filter tobacco, 655 kg of hand rolling and pipe tobacco, 61 kg of raw tobacco, 19.3 kg of smoking tobacco, and 251 kg water-pipe tobacco.

68% of all detected cigarettes were transported by maritime ships, more than likely using standardized containers. Having in mind the large capacity of this type of transportation, a special attention should be maintained by law enforcement authorities from seaports across SELEC region.

Trucks or lorries were the second most used means of transportation for smuggling cigarettes, accounting for 15% of the total number of seized cigarettes during the Operation. Compared to maritime vessels, trucks allow the transportation of relatively large amount of goods on very flexible routes. The majority of these detections involving this type of transportation were made during routine checks, mainly on major roadways.
Joint Investigations

A total number of 9 joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force.

**Joint investigation GENEVA** between Serbian and Romanian Customs Administrations, initiated in 2015 and targeting an organized criminal group dealing with smuggling of watches, “ROLEX” brand, from Republic of Serbia to Romania. As *modus operandi* used was legal shopping of the watches and export declaration for VAT return while exiting Republic of Serbia without declaring the import of goods in Romania. A number of 12 such cases with total value of unpaid duties and taxes of more than 140,000 Euro was recorded. The case investigated also revealed corrupted border police officers involved in the smuggling. The operation succeeded with the arrest of 17 Romanian citizens.

**Joint investigation TAX JOB** involved Serbian and Romanian authorities and targeted the tax felony of falsely claiming a VAT refund for a Serbian company (tax fraud). The investigation was related to a fictive export of goods from Republic of Serbia to Romania, total invoice value being 1.2 million Euro. The investigation revealed that the export did not take place and that the Romanian consignor never received the goods nor did it have any commercial relation with the Serbian company. Four Serbian citizens were prosecuted for tax crime.

**Joint investigation CATFISH** between Hungarian and Serbian authorities, was developed during the period February - November 2016, and targeted the smuggling of goods to the Serbian territory. The investigation was related to 3 Serbian citizens prosecuted for smuggling goods from Hungary, the total amount of the smuggled goods being estimated at more than 470,000 Euro.

**Joint investigation DANUBE/DUNA** involved Republic of Bulgaria, Romania and Republic of Serbia and targeted an organized criminal group dealing with illegal production of tobacco products and cigarettes smuggling from Republic of Serbia to European Union countries, through Romania, using complex *modus operandi*. During the investigation 14.5 million pieces of cigarettes were seized by the Bulgarian authorities, 11.5 million pieces by the Romanian authorities, 8 persons, including the organizers, were arrested and the storage house for smuggled cigarettes was revealed.
Chapter 8

Terrorism
The Anti-Terrorism Task Force, coordinated by Republic of Turkey, was established in 2003, and has the following sub-groups:

- **Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons**, coordinated by Republic of Albania
- **Trafficking in Weapons of Mass Destruction**, coordinated by Romania
- **Terrorist Groups**, coordinated by Republic of Turkey

As a response to new emerging terrorist threats and in line with SELEC Convention’s provisions, and the ideas expressed by the representatives of the Member States, SELEC further increased and diversified the operational support provided to the law enforcement agencies in their fight against terrorism.

During 5 - 6 of April 2016, SELEC organized at its headquarters in Bucharest/Romania, the 6th meeting of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force. The meeting brought together experts and decision-makers from SELEC Member States and its Partners (EUBAM, Europol, INTERPOL, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ukraine and United States of America).

During the meeting, the representatives of the Member States delivered case examples and presentations on the current situation in the counter terrorism field, challenges met and good practices, referring also to new legal provisions in force, competent authorities, statistical results, trends, foreign terrorist fighters, radicalization, infiltration of terrorists in the migration flow and links between organized crime and terrorism.

SELEC Member States are developing a wide range of activities against terrorism and are adapting their national systems to better respond to these new threats.

The threat posed by terrorist groups and especially by Foreign Terrorist Fighters, either taking part in conflict areas or returning in their home countries, was emphasized by the participants along with the importance of sharing information and cooperating internationally.

It was underlined the importance of developing integrated national multi-disciplinary strategies in preventing and countering terrorism, involving all members of the society.
The meeting provided a forum in which participants discussed the current terrorist threats in Southeast Europe, new *modus operandi* and trends of terrorist organizations, with the overall aim of enhancing cooperation and decide on the potential directions to be followed at regional level. The event offered the opportunity for discussing practical aspects in fighting terrorism, for exchanging operational information and proposing new joint investigations.

Operational meetings are part of the pro-active approach of SELEC in increasing operational support to its Member States in fighting terrorism and facilitating the exchange of information.

**Joint Investigations**

In 2016, three joint investigations were developed by the Member States in the framework of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force.

**Joint investigation RIVA** conducted between The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Turkey. The operation targeted an organized criminal group dealing with migrants smuggling, but part of the perpetrators were suspected of being involved in terrorist activities, including supporting Foreign Terrorist Fighters from The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The case succeeded with the arrest of 30 persons (8 Turkish, 21 Syrian and 1 Iraqi citizens) being involved in illegal migration and trafficking of human beings, and identification of 192 migrants (138 Syrian, 25 Myanmar, 20 Afghan, 7 Iranian and 2 Iraqi citizens). One person wanted for murder and involvement in terrorist organization was also arrested.

**Joint investigation KABATAS**, that involved law enforcement authorities from Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Republic of Turkey, targeted an organized criminal group dealing with migrant smuggling. 168 migrants and 11 persons suspected for “producing or arranging forged documents” and for “migrant smuggling” were apprehended during the 32 actions that took place at national and international level. Most of the detained Turkish migrants were wanted, as being involved in various factions of idiosyncratic terrorist organizations.
Chapter 9

Container Security
Task Force Meeting on Container Security

The Container Security Task Force, coordinated by Hellenic Republic, was established in 2005. The 9th meeting of the Container Security Task Force was held on 15 of November 2016, at SELEC premises in Bucharest, Romania. Representatives of SELEC Member States and of partners such as France, Interpol, Spain, Ukraine, UNODC and USA attended the meeting.

Container shipping is the most common way of transporting large quantities of commercial goods all over the world; however, containers may not be exclusively used for the transport of legal commodities. Organized criminal groups use containers for transporting different illicit commodities such as drugs and drug precursors, smuggled cigarettes, counterfeit goods, hazardous waste, dual use commodities, a/o.

SELEC Member States’ experts discussed on the current situation in the Container Security field, namely the new trends, challenges encountered, investigations conducted and made proposals in this regard, overall aiming at strengthening the cooperation at regional level.

During the meeting, the questionnaire to be used as base for developing the 2015 - 2016 SEE Regional Assessment on Container Security was also presented.

It was proposed to organize a two days advanced training for the frontline officers in order to conduct a practical exercise in the Port of Piraeus or in the Port of Thessaloniki, with a real time control of containers. As well, it was proposed to organise a regional operation connected with other SELEC Task Forces, namely the Anti-Drug Trafficking or Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling Task Force, focusing on smuggling of goods with containers.
Chapter 10

Environment and Nature Related Crimes
Task Force Meeting on Environment and Nature Related Crimes

The Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force, coordinated by Hungary, was established in 2009, and has one subgroup named “Crimes against Cultural Heritage Goods” coordinated by The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

On 4th of October 2016, SELEC organized the 6th meeting of the Environment and Nature Related Crimes, at its headquarters in Bucharest/Romania. The meeting, aiming to discuss the regional approaches in preventing and combating environment and nature related crimes and to enhance the cooperation at regional level, gathered experts from SELEC Member States and Partners, such as Belgium, Europol, France, Spain and Ukraine.

The meeting offered the platform for networking, the representatives of Police and Customs of SELEC Member States presenting successful cases, sharing experiences, good practices, as well as challenges encountered in investigations carried out in order to prevent and counter this type of crime.

SELEC Member States experts discussed on the actions to be further developed within the framework of the Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force, a new regional operation being proposed to be carried out in 2017.

Regional Operation ORION 3

Regional Operation ORION 3 targeting illegal hunting of protected bird species and trafficking of endangered and protected animals was carried out between October 3, 2016 and October 10, 2016, with the participation of all SELEC Member States.

The Operation primarily focused on joint and coordinated measures of the law enforcement agencies and all the other environmental authorities of the participating Member States against perpetrators, abettors committing illegal hunting and smugglers trafficking valuable hunting trophies such as rhino horns and ivory for manufacturing ornaments or traditional medicines.

Joint Investigations

A number of 3 joint investigations were supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Environment and Nature Related Crimes Task Force.

Joint investigation PEKOM involved the competent Bulgarian and Turkish law enforcement institutions who successfully finalized two actions related to an operation targeting dismantling an organized criminal group dealing with cultural heritage objects' smuggling.

During the first action, two members of the organized criminal group were arrested while attempting to cross the Bulgarian/Turkish border with 170 artifacts, ancient byzantine coins, several roman denarius’s, byzantine solidus, roman golden rings, statues, a/o.

As a follow up, in a second action of the same operation, two Turkish citizens smuggling a number of 778 pieces of artifacts, ancient byzantine coins, several roman denarius’s, byzantine solidus, roman golden rings, a/o were apprehended.

The total value of the seized items is approximately 700,000 Euro.
SELEC - a law enforcement, treaty-based, international organization that gathers Police and Customs from the Southeast European (SEE) region

Established in 2011, successor of SECI Center

12 Member States, 3 Operational partners, 18 Observers

Regional operations

- MIRAGE, on smuggling of migrants and illegal migration
- ORION 3, on illegal hunting and trafficking of endangered species
- ECLIPSE, on smuggling of cigarettes
- KNOW-HOW2, on counterfeit goods

2,126,326 detections of illegal migrants
2001 victims of trafficking in human beings identified
More than 10.5 tons opiates
Almost 72 tons cannabis products
20,015 vehicles recovered in the SELEC region
Close to 4.5 billion cigarettes and 350 tons of smoking tobacco seized

14 Analytical products for SEE developed in the framework of the 8 Task Forces, such as: Drug seizures report, Report on illegal migration, Report on trafficking in human beings, Report on tobacco products smuggling, Report on Vehicles Crime in SELEC Member States, a/o

SELEC Concept

Exchange of information
Requests of assistance
Joint investigations
Regional operations
Analytical products
This publication and more information about SELEC are available online at www.selec.org