



Bundesanwaltschaft
Ministère public de la Confédération
Ministero pubblico della Confederazione
Procura pubblica federala

Coordinated anti-Mafia action in Switzerland and Italy

Bern, 21.07.2020 - Bern. Swiss and Italian authorities have carried out coordinated actions against a criminal organisation associated with the Calabrian Mafia, the 'Ndrangheta. Following joint investigations, on the morning of 21 July 2020 there were persons arrested and house searches conducted in both countries. In Switzerland, in the cantons of Aargau, Solothurn, Zug and Ticino, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG) in cooperation with fedpol conducted several house searches and arrested one person. In addition to representatives from the OAG and fedpol, there were numerous police officers from the cantonal police forces involved in the action.

The action is the result of criminal proceedings being conducted by the OAG particularly on suspicion of supporting and/or participating in a criminal organisation (Art. 260ter Swiss Criminal Code [SCC]), money laundering (Art. 305bis SCC), handling stolen goods (Art. 160 SCC), passing on or tendering counterfeit money (Art. 242 SCC), importing acquiring and storing counterfeit money (Art. 244 SCC) and on suspicion of offences under Article 19 paragraph 2 of the Narcotics Act (NarcA).

The criminal proceedings are currently being conducted against six persons with Italian citizenship, most of whom are resident in Switzerland. The accused persons are suspected of participating in and supporting an Italian 'Ndrangheta organisation. The extensive investigations, in the course of which the OAG has also been able to question two principal witnesses in Italy, have revealed that the accused were carrying out different illegal activities. For instance it is suspected that counterfeit money has been smuggled from Italy to Switzerland. Also there are presumed activities connected to weapon and drug-trafficking, as well as to money laundering. The accused have been living for many years in Switzerland and, presumably, carried out the illegal activities along with legal activities, such as investments, grant of loans or even the management of a restaurant. All of these activities are believed to

have reinforced the strength of the criminal organization.

Several house searches and one arrest

One of the accused has been arrested in the Canton of Argovia, the detention on a preventive measure has already been requested for. One of the accused has been arrested in Italy and will remain there in detention on a preventive measure for now. Two of the accused have been interrogated in Switzerland and subsequently released. A further accused person was already being detained in Italy; the results of the investigation relating to this person will be transmitted to the Italian criminal prosecution authorities. Further interrogations will be held. In four cantons, that is Argovia, Solothurn, Zug, and Ticino, various private residences and business premises have been searched thus putting in security numerous elements of evidence, among them weapons, ammunition and cash.

The suspects are accused of supporting and participating in a criminal organisation, of which the creation, the existence and the criminal energy have been proven by legally binding judgements in Italy. In the spring of 2016, the Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Calabrian Province of Catanzaro addressed to the OAG a spontaneous communication of information relating to criminal facts, thus requesting for the constitution of a joint investigation team. The Office of the Public Prosecutor in Catanzaro has furthermore pointed out some individuals residing in Switzerland whom, presumably, were involved in the illicit action carried out by the criminal organisation. The OAG and the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Catanzaro then agreed to set up a common investigation team – a so-called "Joint Investigation Team" (JIT) – to coordinate the transnational criminal investigations. In September 2016 the OAG opened criminal proceedings in this context.

The OAG would like to thank the Italian partner authorities, in particular the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Catanzaro, fedpol and the Police forces of the various cantons that were involved for the sake of a good cooperation.

For information about the action of the partner Italian authorities, the OAG is referring to the Office of the Public Prosecutor in Catanzaro: <http://www.procura.catanzaro.it/>

The presumption of innocence applies to all parties in the proceedings. The OAG will not comment any further on the criminal proceedings and/or on specific procedural steps at present.

Prosecution and fight against the organised crime

The Prosecution and the fight against the organised crime constitute a strategic priority for the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG). The OAG is conducting various criminal proceedings that have as an object criminal organisations, the majority of these being Italian. These criminal proceedings involve investigations into various crimes, however, the suspicion of supporting and/or participating in a criminal organisation (Art.

260ter SCC) is a central aspect of the majority of these criminal proceedings. Organised crime is a cross-border and dynamic phenomenon. The cooperation with the partner authorities in Switzerland and in other countries as well is decisive for the criminal prosecution and the fight against it. In Switzerland, this is a joint task for the criminal prosecution and security services at both the federal and the cantonal levels, each of which dispose of different competences and instruments.

As Switzerland cannot fight on its own such serious forms of criminality, tight cooperation with the other countries and the direct exchange of information amongst the relevant authorities are fundamental. It is also essential to use common instruments in the framework of common investigation teams («JIT», Joint Investigation Teams), in order to establish direct and efficient coordination of the international investigations. Such forms of cooperation on an international level, being already put in place, in particular with Italy, have proven to be an efficient instrument for the exchange of information relating to the criminal instructions. The harmonisation of national legislations is another theme of some fundamental importance.

Address for enquiries

Communication Service of the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland, T +41 58 464 32 40, info@ba.admin.ch

Publisher

Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland

<http://www.ba.admin.ch/>

<https://www.bundesanwaltschaft.ch/content/mpc/en/home/medien/archiv-medienmitteilungen/news-seite.msg-id-79900.html>