

LOGBOOK

Stories, data, and mechanisms
of crime proliferation
in Italian ports



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Logbook.
Stories, data, and mechanisms of crime proliferation in Italian ports

by Marco Antonelli, Francesca Rispoli and Peppe Ruggiero.
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Our thanks go to Viviana Marrocco for her collaboration.

The report narrates events that appear in judicial investigations, institutional documents, and police and press reports. The presumption of innocence and the rights guaranteed by the Constitution apply for the facts cited, except for final convictions,.

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PREAMBLE

In **1976**, the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission (CPA), in a final document, **first traced early references to the centrality of ports for the Cosa Nostra's work**. In the 6th Parliament term's final report, the Commission reports several critical situations. These include, for example, the "mafia management of the Mazara del Vallo harbour" (CPA1976a, 1099) and the use of Trapani's port to illegally traffic wine products. From that distant 1976, especially in the early 2000s, signs of illegal "business" in Italian ports appeared constantly in various institutional acts and documents. Many Italian harbours from North to South are mentioned in public reports. **Maritime ports represent an opportunity for criminal groups to increase their profits and strengthen collusion**. Ports can be considered a point of arrival, transit, exchange and intersection. There, people and goods move and are mobilised, generating wealth. Criminal interests find two possible fields of expansion; on one hand, businesses are created by trafficking. On the other hand, they can infiltrate investments necessary to maintain operational infrastructures. Ports have a dual nature, where private and public, and international and local actors interact, in a central space at the intersections of global trade.

The National Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrori-

sm Directorate (DNA) and the Anti-Mafia Investigative Directorate (DIA) have long reported the presence in Italian and European ports of criminal groups that conduct activities both in the legal economy and in illicit markets, in particular in drug trafficking. The mafias play an important role in this game: **'Ndrangheta, Camorra and Cosa Nostra are just some of the criminal organizations operating in Italian ports**. Nevertheless, these are not the only actors involved. As numerous surveys have shown, multiple actors must participate. In many cases, they are part of the legal economy: port workers, public employees, and maritime entrepreneurs and professionals. The mafias' success is often due to the ability to identify the right channels and connections that allow them to avoid the many constraints of the economic and political system deployed to protect the port. Often, this is done through formally lawful means, following the market laws of the port economy. Therefore, frequent corruption episodes are conducted by networks of widespread illegality already present in the port. The centrality of trade routes, as well as the permeability of the socio-economic environment, have made some ports more attractive than others. **In recent years, mafia interests seems to have also spread into different hubs than in the past**, such as that of Vado Ligure.

This trend seems to highlight diversification by criminal groups, which aim to identify the most suitable port for the illegal enterprise's success. This attractiveness is certainly linked to some of port operations' intrinsic characteristics. These include the port economy's type and breadth, the political-institutional context, and the permeability of the collusion networks present. **Not only the port's geography and geographical location make the difference, but criminal actors can take advantage of the context's specific opportunities.**

A simple review of the data from the press review, the reports of the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission, the DIA, the DNA, the Customs Agency and the Guardia di Finanza, is enough to be fully aware of the spread of criminal interests within the country's ports. **The following data was systematized and processed in this Report:**

- During 2022, there were **140 cases** of crime in Italian ports, about **one episode every 3 days**. These took place in 29 ports, of which 23 were of national importance, corresponding to 40%. The snapshot emerges through analysis of Customs Agency and Guardia di Finanza press releases and from the Assoporti press review, from which all references to criminal emergence were extracted.

140
crime cases

1 every 3 days

in 29 ports
23 of national relevance (40%)



- **Of the 140 cases, 85.7% (120) concern illegal importing of goods** or products, **7.9%** (11) concern illegal exporting of goods or products, and **2.9% (4) concern seizures of goods in transit**. The rest relate to other illegal phenomena that cannot be classified. Analysing criminal actors' activities, we can see that **only a small part (4) concerns penetration into the port's legal economy, while in 136 cases, the activities are illegal**. In the latter case, the data that stands out most concerns trafficking in counterfeit goods, equal to 49.3% of mapped cases, followed by drug trafficking with 23.2% and smuggling with 11.6%. To a marginal extent, crimes include currency offences (5.8%), illicit waste trafficking (2.9%), financial crime

and animal trafficking (both at 2.2%), receiving stolen goods (1.4%), arms trafficking and money laundering (both at 0.7%).

87.5% (120)
import of
illegal goods

7.9% (11)
export of illegal goods

- From 2006 to 2022, more than one in seven Italian ports were caught on the radar of organized crime. Analysing the reports

of the National Anti-Mafia Directorate and the Anti-Mafia Investigative Directorate, published between 2006 and 2022, **at least 54 Italian ports were subject to criminal plans**, out of a total of 351 Italian ports, **with the participation of at least 66 clans** operating in illegal and legal business activities. The phenomenon has affected the whole country, from North to South.

54
italian ports
subject to
crime
proliferation

- In the review, it was also possible to highlight which criminal organizations over time have tried to operate in the port area to conduct illegal activities and to infiltrate the legal economy. **These include the traditional Italian mafias**, 'Ndrangheta, Camorra and Cosa Nostra. However, **other criminal organizations of Italian origin also appear: the Magliana gang, the Sacra Corona Unita and Bari criminal groups**. Interests of other different groups are indicated exclusively by geographical origin (either because they conduct the main activities there, or because of the members' territorial origin) such as Asians, Eastern Europe, North Africa, or by specifying the country of origin, Albania, China, Mexico or Nigeria.

- Recurring references show that the 'Ndrangheta groups operate in several illicit markets; waste trafficking, arms trafficking, cigarette and TLE smuggling, trafficking in counterfeit products, extortion and usury, and above all drug trafficking. The 'Ndran-

**'ndrangheta
camorra
cosa nostra**
criminal organizations
that over time
have shown interest
in the port area

gheta's interests seem to emerge both in the small Calabrian ports (Amantea, Badolato, Cetraro, Corigliano Calabro, Isola di Capo Rizzuto, Tropea, Crotona), and in the important hub of Gioia Tauro. Illegal activities, however, cross regional borders and involve other ports in Southern Italy (Naples and Salerno), Central Italy (such as Livorno) and the North-East (Venice and Trieste). **In Liguria, where 'Ndrangheta presence seems to involve all the main ports, particularly significant ones are Genoa, La Spezia, Vado Ligure and Savona.**

■ Among the methods of recovering the drug, the one that in recent years considerably characterized the Italian port system is the **rip-on/rip-off technique**. It is **the mode in which a legal commercial vessel is used to transport drugs** (usually cocaine) from the country of origin or from the transshipment to the destination port, without the shipowner and the shipping company necessarily being aware of it. This method relies on the availability of a group of people within the port, who, with their roles, skills and abilities, can fetch the drugs from the containers, which are usually hidden among the goods or in special bags placed near the door. The analysis shows that this practice is conducted in several Italian ports both in the North and in the South, also starting a criminal professiona-



lisation processes in each port. Teams of port workers have been cyclically created to retrieve drugs in the main ports of destination for cocaine, such as Genoa, Gioia Tauro, Livorno, and Vado Ligure. More or less formal illegality networks are strengthened by common participation in repeated corrupt exchanges.

**rip-on/rip-off
prevalent drug
recovery method
in the Italian port
system**

The report's general objective is to create a photograph of the methods and trends with which criminal phenomena occur in the port sector, with particular attention to the Italian case and the role of mafia organizations. In detail, the intention is to provide a tool for institutions and citizens to understand the main changes that involve a particularly strategic sector and space for the country, **highlighting both the illicit trafficking that takes place in ports and the opportunities for infiltration into the port economy**. The analysis perspective seeks to highlight the dynamics of interaction between illegal phenomena and actors of the legal economy, to highlight not only criminal groups' actions, but above all the contextual conditions that allow groups to operate.

Criminal outreach within ports are not a new phenomenon, **but this issue only recently began to be addressed in more depth** on different levels (UNODC 2023). For example, a recent Europol report, titled "Criminal Networks in EU Ports: Risks and challenges for Law Enforcement" (Europol 2023), analysed how some organizations are able to conduct illegal trafficking through misappropriation of container reference codes, looking at the cases of Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam. Other research has explored organised crime and corruption in the ports of Genoa, Melbourne, Montreal, New York and New Jersey, and Liverpool (Sergi 2020), while some studies have focused more attention on the centrality of the Balkan area ports for several illegal trafficking crossing Europe

(Scaturro et al. 2022). In Italy, as we will see, some institutions have dealt with this. However, despite the centrality of the port system for the country's economy and the relevance of Italian organized crime in the international chessboard, a broader analysis of the phenomenon is lacking. **In the public debate, reflections on the subject usually emerge in conjunction with major arrests** conducted by law enforcement or on the occasion of huge seizures of drugs or other illegal materials. However, the narrative is often negatively sensationalist, while a more depth analysis seems to be necessary to show not only the criminal groups' actions, but also the criticalities of the ports.

In conclusion, ports seem to be a strategic junction and of fundamental importance

for criminal groups, which can exploit the infrastructure and connections for various purposes. However, **the political debate on the topic still seems too timid**. Strengthening coordination among judicial authorities, law enforcement agencies, public authorities present in the port and the private companies that operate there, seems to be one of the main needs on which to intervene, not only from a repressive perspective, but, above all, for prevention. Public and private **port actors' greater awareness** of the criminal and corrupt risks that characterise the life of ports **seems to be the precondition for the promotion of contexts less prone to illicit trade**, as well as for preparation of development policies consistent with these purposes.

1

A LONG STORY: CRIME IN PORTS ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

1.1. From 1976 to date: the perspective of the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission

In 1976, a final document of the Antimafia Parliamentary Commission first referred to the centrality of ports for the work of Cosa Nostra. In the final report of the 6th Parliament term, the Commission reports several critical situations. For example, these include the "mafia management of the Mazara del Vallo harbour" (CPA 1976a, 1099) by the association of free shipowners with the smuggling of cigarettes in different areas of the Sicilian coasts or the use of the port of Trapani to illegally traffic wine products.

As part of that work, the Commission collects materials from multiple subjects, law enforcement agencies, trade associations, and academia that deal with smuggling cigarettes and tobacco, and drug trafficking, underlining Sicilian ports' centrality for the import and export of illicit products (CPA, 1976b, 1976c).

After more than forty years, and not without periods of inattention, the Commission has recently recognized "the high porosity of Italian anchorage sites, very exposed to the criminal organisations' illicit activities and parallel to possible terrorist threats" (CPA 2022b, p. 4). It went so far as to argue that "**any commercial activity, port area, port terminal, anchorage waters, water bodies falling into the territorial sea have sensitive aspects, potentially being exposed to the risk of mafia infiltration or terrorist attacks**" (*ibid.*).

In the years that elapsed between these two reports, the Commission addressed the issue on several occasions, sometimes reporting potential risks to the sector, sometimes conducting investigative activities on individual cases. Retracing this evolution in stages allows us to appreciate how institutional attention has changed over time and some ports have presented different critical issues for years.

With the coming of the 11th Parliamentary Term Commission, after the Capaci

and via d'Amelio bombings there was a progressive recognition of the criminal organisations' interests in ports outside Sicily. An example is represented by Puglia, where the analysis of illegal activities of local groups has recognized ports as entry points and coordination places for illegal activities, mainly due to their geographical location (CPA, 1993). A similar assumption was also presented in another report concerning the presence of criminal organisations in non-traditional areas, in particular in the Liguria region. In this context, the Commissioners state that the maritime connections provided by three ports (La Spezia, Savona and Genoa) have contributed to making the regional territory a place of choice for organised criminal activities, such as illegal trafficking of drugs and weapons (CPA, 1994). This thesis has also been further strengthened regarding Northern Tuscany, where it is mentioned that the province of Massa Carrara is involved in a considerable traffic of narcotic substances, facilitated by the presence of the port of Marina di Carrara (CPA, 1994). In the same report, reference is also made to illicit maritime trafficking involving Sardinia, in addition to the interests of criminal organisations in two ports in the North-East: Venice and Marghera.

In the 2000s, during the 13th Parliament Term, the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission drafted several reports containing various references on organised crime involvement within ports. The Commission has conducted several investigations both on specific territories and on certain illegal trafficking. Two reports were very relevant. One concerned the state of the fight against organised crime in Campania (CPA, 2000a) and another on the same subject in Cala-



bria (CPA, 2000b). The second contains numerous references to the port of Gioia Tauro, which was involved in some criminal trials during that period. The Commission's efforts highlight the port's dual nature. On one hand, as a place where the 'ndrine of the 'Ndrangheta trade illicit goods and, on the other hand, as a space where these

organisations infiltrate the legal economy. For example, **the Commission focuses on Mafia interests in container handling activities, fuel refuelling, cleaning services and water supply to the pier through the creation of specific companies operating within the legal economy.**

The final report refers again to the port of Gioia Tauro, focusing not only on the operational capabilities of the 'Ndrangheta within the legal economy, but above all on public institutions' underestimations. The commissioners highlight that the Prefecture of Reggio Calabria has defined the presence of companies close to the 'Ndrangheta in port activities simply as "secondary" (CPA, 2001a, p. 59) and that no significant preventive action has been observed in the territorial bodies of the prefecture of Reggio Calabria. Consequently, there has been a "total absence of coordination and planning of administrative control that, instead of constituting an obstacle to mafia companies, facilitates them with silence, connivance, negligence" (CPA, 2001a, p. 62).

During the 13th Parliament Term, the approved reports addressed **tobacco smuggling**. This analysis highlighted a considerably more intricate situation than that observed a few decades earlier, underlining Italy's involvement both as a place of transit and as a destination. **Ports of Ancona, Bari and Brindisi were mentioned**, where the transport of tobacco apparently took place by ferry from Patras, Corfu, Igoumenitsa and Split (CPA, 2001b). To these, in the 2003 report, the port of Genoa is added, where people linked to the Camorra seemed to be active in the business (CPA 2003). The same document also mentions the port of Brindisi as a pole of criminal attraction, while other ports of call are defined as gateways for drugs (Trieste, Ravenna, Naples, Venice). The Commission's in-depth work was assisted by the hearing of the representatives of some Port Authorities. These allowed outlining a general picture of the criminal situation within the ports. The recurring illegal elements inclu-

de infiltration in subcontracts managed by concessionaires, selection of port labour, and presence of persons with criminal records within port areas. **The Commission identifies as necessary measures greater coordination of controls, intelligence work and monitoring.** As we shall see, there are still critical issues and potential solutions.

Similar research work is also found in the final report of the 14th Parliament Term, in which the Commission seems to take greater account of organised crime interests within ports (CPA 2006). The Commission maps actual criminal expansion that, at different times and in different ways, have affected many Italian ports throughout the peninsula. This outreach can be seen in the ports of Tropea, Badolato and Cetraro, but also in Monfalcone, Ancona, Naples and Genoa. Criminal events not strictly related to illegal traffic have affected the

“Any trade activity, port area, port terminal, anchorage area, water body flowing into the territorial sea has sensitive aspects, potentially exposing them to the risk of mafia infiltration or terrorist attacks”

2022 Anti-Mafia Commission

Brindisi port, where “a series of corruption and bribery towards companies were highlighted, with the active participation of members of the Municipal Administration and the Port Authority” (CPA 2006, p. 624). **The**

Port of Gioia Tauro is taken as a possible negative example, “since the mafia infiltration model of the port of Gioia Tauro could also be used in other locations to intercept flows of large national and international investments” (CPA 2006, p. 219). During the 15th Parliament Term, the Commission continued its analysis of the port of Gioia Tauro, also thanks to a particular focus on the ‘Ndrangheta, to whose activities a specific report is reserved (CPA 2008). **The Commission’s perspective seems to recognize the dominant role of ‘Ndrangheta in all economic, political and criminal aspects revolving around the port**, to which part of a chapter is dedicated. The “subordination to the ‘Ndrangheta” of the port concessionaires, the “substantial dissolution of any legitimate competition” and the mafia conditioning of “the entire range of internal and induced activities” are described. Such scaremongering seems to look at the port as an environment in which the ‘Ndrangheta conducts cross-cutting work with capillary and pervasive control.

In the final report of the 16th Parliament Term, **further elements seem to emerge, especially regarding the Ligurian case.** There, in addition to the ports of Genoa, Vado Ligure and La Spezia for drug trafficking, the conditioning of organized crime also shows itself in the legal economy, **in particular in construction of the new port of Ventimiglia** (CPA 2013).

More recently, in the final report of February 2018 of the 17th Parliament Term, chaired by MP Rosy Bindi, the Commission raised an alarm regarding the port of Gioia Tauro, where “the hegemonic gangs in the Piana control the management activities of the internal services of the port, where they can also count on the complicity and sup-

port of technicians and workers for drug transshipment operations from containers to land” (CPA 2018, p. 53). Repression, at that time, seemed insufficient: “it is still difficult, by the investigators’ admission, to intercept the circulation of money used to move drug batches. If we do not intervene and block the financial mechanisms that allow traffickers to move the game

“The port of Salerno is traditionally the landing point of trafficking in narcotic substances and counterfeit goods, often conducted by criminal organizations not operating in the province”

2022 Anti-Mafia Commission

pieces on the global drug chessboard, we will never get to the heart of the problem. We must identify and target the financial mechanisms upstream of drug trafficking” (CPA 2018, p.53).

In the last report of the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission (18th Parliament Term) chaired by Nicola Morra, approved in September 2022, two reports are worthy of attention. The first concerns the continuity of the role of the port of Gioia Tauro as a crossroads of criminal interests. The second analyses in more detail the port of Salerno, stating that it is “traditionally a landing point for trafficking in narcotic substances and counterfeit goods, whi-

ch often belong to criminal organisations also operating outside the province.” (CPA 2022, p 240) The Commission recognises the port’s importance not only at national level, but above all as a service facility for the industrial and commercial system of the Centre-South. “Public investments in recent years have made the port infrastructure particularly attractive to mafia organisations due to the potential advantages deriving from criminal control activities. Therefore, the prefecture of Salerno, with the police forces, pays constant attention to the port of Salerno to prevent any form of mafia infiltration” (*ivi*).

Also in the 18th Parliament Term, the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Committee launched an investigation and set up a Committee on Port Security and legal measures against organized crime infiltration. Three ports of call are under investigation: Trieste, Gioia Tauro and Genoa. Through hearings and on-site mission, the Commission found out several issues. In Trieste, for example, legal compliance protocols signed by local public authorities have not been implemented for some years. Mafia organisations attempted to launder money through the acquisition of companies operating in the purchase and sale of oil but stopped thanks to the intervention of the Prefecture and the judicial authority. **There were great expectations for PNNR funds but accompanied by the awareness that these investments are the object of attention by criminal consortia.** In Gioia Tauro, on the other hand, the hearings show that “the port fence that circles the perimeter has, in some cases, been trespassed by unknown persons, who cut the support pins of some panels in areas less covered by video surveillance systems” (CPA



2022b, p.28). Several terminal company employees were also captured in anti-mafia operations. Some of them have been sentenced and consequently dismissed for just cause; others are detained awaiting trial, and others under house arrest, but with the possibility of working. Finally, according to the Commission, the port of Genoa is “exposed to the dynamics of the main indigenous criminal macro-phenomena and other transnational criminal organisations, including mainly drug trafficking, smuggling or counterfeiting, including in the food and pharmaceutical sector, and illicit trafficking of waste, especially of dangerous nature” (CPA 2022b, p. 35). Although the numerous measures put in place to curb these phenomena are described, the framework has several gaps, for example regarding the legality protocols that should protect from criminal interests the 200 bil-

lion and 600 million euros provided for by the extraordinary intervention plan of the Western Ligurian Sea Port Authority. The report says, “The legality protocol is an act containing a series of requirements regarding the competitors, who must sign it, under penalty of exclusion from the competition. The problem is that the bidders usually submit papers but, subsequently, in the award of subcontracts, elements can appear that are highly at risk from the point of view of the rules on anti-mafia and anti-corruption” (CPA 2022b, p. 51).

At the end of the report, the Commission indicates three measures to ensure an effective fight against organised crime. These are specific **legality protocols, disqualification measures for companies** that have access to port areas **and coordination at European and international level, with**

reinforcement of the public authority staff and the repressive and preventive tools available. These are certainly necessary measures. However, to be truly effective, they require a strong political will aimed at their effective implementation. The risk that they will be only paper commitments is too high.

1.2 Drug Trafficking and Criminal Organisations: Institutional Perspective

Since 2006, in CPA, DNA and DIA reports, references to criminal interests in ports are present every year. In some cases they focus on law enforcement agencies’ seizure and arrest operations.

Most recent DIA reports abound in references to criminal screenings in Italian ports. In most cases, these **important operations are conducted by law enforcement agencies that have dismembered several organisations in some of the main commercial ports.** As the Central Directorate of Anti-Drug Services (DCSA) recalls, these are often episodes of drug trafficking, in particular cocaine, which in Italy “mainly arrives by sea to ports and coastal areas” (DCSA 2023, p. 111). To discuss the choice of a specific focus on the methods of illicit trafficking in the port, in the introduction to the annual report the DCSA Director sustains that “the ability to control the ports of call, a refined risk analysis for identification of contaminated containers, monitoring of computerized platforms for handling containers within the hubs, are, in the near future, about to become the “red line” along which drug trafficking repression will run, in national ports and even more so in large European ports.” (DCSA 2023, p.11)

A short time ago, in the DIA’s 2019 semi-annual report, special attention was paid to **the Port of Genoa**: “In the business of drugs - especially cocaine and heroin - and the transport by sea of other illicit cargoes, several transnational criminal organisations are active, which have identified the port of Genoa as a privileged berth for its central position in the Mediterranean” (DIA 2019a, p. 332). This attention is also confirmed by another passage in the second semester report, stating that Liguria is “an ideal landing point and transit area for drugs to the streets of the northwest of the country and Europe, long considered “under special surveillance” and the port of Genoa is considered among the most infiltrated by the ‘Ndrangheta” (DIA 2019b, p 40). The investigations reveal the involvement of several affiliates of the Avignon dynasty of Taurianova (RC), the Alvaro dynasty of Sinopoli (RC) and the Bellocco dynasty of Rosarno (RC). **The Port of Naples is also included in the DIA’s 2020 semi-annual report**, as follows: “In the area of the Port of Naples, which has always been considered a focal point for the control of trafficking in narcotic substances and counterfeit goods, but also for the extortion sector, to the detriment of commercial operators and entrepreneurs inside and outside the port, the Montescuro clan remains operational. This is despite having recently been involved in an investigation that involved its leaders and affiliates as well as senior members of other city groups” (DIA 2020a, p. 183).

Even central Italy, as we have seen, is not safe from these phenomena. Marcello Viola, Attorney General of Florence, on inauguration of the 2021 Judicial Year, raised **alarm about Tuscany** in the introductory report. “The Port of Livorno seems to have

become a privileged alternative, of ever-increasing importance, compared to other ports such as Gioia Tauro and Genoa, for importing narcotics from South America, especially cocaine [...] Numerous investigations in progress regarding criminal proceedings in international drug trafficking have confirmed the substantial framework already outlined during the previous years. They highlight that Tuscany, both for its particular geographical position and for the infrastructures present (**in particular Livorno, one of the first Italian ports for moved goods**), is often used as a gateway for organized criminal groups importing large quantities of narcotic substance and constitutes a very attractive market for organisations” (General Prosecutor of Florence, p. 15).

Trying to reconstruct a map of these interests from North to South through the recent DIA reports (semester 1 and 2, 2022), the port of La Spezia is mentioned. There, in January 2022, cocaine hidden in a container from Porto Caucedo (Republic of Santo Domingo) and destined for Valencia (Spain) was seized.

Also for Liguria, **the port of Vado Ligure appears on two occasions**. In the first case, it is at the centre of an operation conducted in February 2022 by the State Police of Bologna, Savona, Pisa, Vicenza, Lucca, Arezzo, in collaboration with the Agency of Customs and Monopoly. It led to the arrest of two Dominicans and an Italian. The group, active between Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany and Veneto, with the complicity of an Italian entrepreneur, imported cocaine from the Republic of Santo Domingo in Italy, right through the Savona port. The report states that “according to the investigators’ reconstruction, **the drug arrived on board cargo ships carrying containers contain-**

ing “raw bovine leather.” They were destined for a company active in the province of Pisa that dealt with the trade of leather imported through the maritime port” (DIA 2022a p. 263). Vado Ligure returned to the spotlight in November 2022 when the Savona Guardia di Finanza arrested a criminal group consisting of three Italians and an Albanian, who imported cocaine by hiding it inside refrigerated containers. The investigation shows that “the drug was recovered by two Italians who worked within the port area, already tried and convicted for such conduct” (DIA 2022a, p. 292).

From the Ligurian Sea to the Tyrrhenian Sea, the port of Livorno also appears in the DIA analysis as a “centre” for the entry into Tuscany, and more generally in Italy, of cocaine from overseas” (DIA 2022b, p. 271). This role was also confirmed in July 2022 when more than 200 kg of cocaine were seized, again hidden in a refrigerated container from Ecuador.

A few hundred kilometres further south, **the port of Civitavecchia was also a gateway for drugs in 2022**. Following checks conducted by the Guardia di Finanza and the Customs Agency, over 400 kg of cocaine were found hidden in a fruit shipment from South America. This is one of the most significant quantities ever seized in the Lazio port. Also on that coast, the DIA reported an operation conducted by the Carabinieri and Guardia di Finanza that led to the seizure of about 275 kg of cocaine in the port of Salerno.

Not only the west coast is mentioned in the reports. **Attention is drawn even to ports in the Adriatic area**. “Many seizures were conducted, for example, in the semester in question, in the port of Brindisi. Goods

were counterfeited by Greece, sometimes involving organized crime of Chinese origin” (DIA 2022b, p. 285).

One port of call above all, however, seems to have found greater space in institutional actors’ analyses: the port of Gioia Tauro. The DCSA states that “it plays a role of absolute centrality [...] in which 80.35% of the cocaine seizures conducted at the maritime border are concentrated, with an incidence of 61.73% of the national total” (DCSA 2023, p. 6). **In 2022, 16,110.38 kg were seized in Gioia Tauro and over 30 tons in the last two years**. In the ranking, the port of Civitavecchia follows, setting a record with over 1 ton seized, erasing the best result that had been recorded in 2019, with 94 kg intercepted. In third place is the port of Trieste, where 730 kg of cocaine were seized during the year.

The centrality of ports is also found for the entry of other types of substances, for example hashish. **“The maritime border, with 839.77 kg, confirms the operating scenario where the highest total quantities of hashish were intercepted [...]**. The countries of origin were Spain (533.82 kg) and Morocco (274.45 kg)” (DCSA 2023, p. 226). Also in this case, more seizures have been conducted in the ports in the western area: Civitavecchia 522 kg, Genoa 274 kg, Reggio Calabria 31 kg, Porto Torres 11 kg. The same applies for heroin arriving across the maritime border. Of that intercepted during the year (23.64 kg), 90% passed through the port of Ancona alone, while residual quotas were found in the ports of Porto Torres, Cagliari, Alghero and Bari



1.3 A Look at Europe and the World

The DCSA reserved an in-depth analysis of international cocaine trafficking by sea in its 2023 report. As reconstructed, “in 2020, in particular, **520 cocaine seizures were conducted, reported from 12 EU Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain) and from 3 countries outside the EU (Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom)**” (DCSA 2023b, p. 113).

The report goes on to state that “The amount of cocaine seized amounts to **282 tons**, found in **75 different ports**, distributed as follows:

- 301 seizures (171 tonnes) in 35 EU ports;
- 11 seizures (2 tonnes) in 6 ports in non-EU countries;
- 206 seizures (108 tonnes) in 32 ports in Latin America;
- 1 seizure (0.5 tonnes) in an African port;
- 1 seizure (0.5 tonnes) in a North American port.

In short, in 2020, 108 tons of cocaine bound for Europe were seized in ports of departure located in Latin America and about 171 tons (about 80% of the cocaine intercepted in Europe, equal to 213 tons) were seized in the main container ports of the European Union” (ivi).



520
cocaine
seizures



12
EU States



3
Non-
EU



282
tons



75
port

UE



301 **171** **35**
seizures tons port

NON EU



11 **2** **6**
seizures tons port

LATIN AMERICA



206 **108** **32**
seizures tons port

AFRICA



1 **0,5** **1**
seizures tons port

NORD AMERICA



1 **0,5** **1**
seizures tons port

More generally, in the DCSA report many countries are mentioned because they are involved in some way with illicit trafficking, or because they are producing countries, or because they are transit countries of the goods, or because they are destination countries. Even a simple list of ports within the report makes clear the spread of illegal routes, as well as the **overlap with legal trade routes**. According to a non-exhaustive representation, **88 ports can be found in 35 countries:**

- **Albania:** Durres
- **Argentina:** Buenos Aires, Rosario-Zarate
- **Belgium:** Antwerp
- **Brazil:** Santos, Rio
- **Canada:** Halifax, Saint John, Vancouver
- **Chile:** Arica and Iquique
- **Colombia:** Cartagena, Santa Marta, Turbo and Buenaventura, Tumaco, Puerto Bolivar, and Barranquilla, Uraba
- **Ivory Coast:** Abidjan, San Pedro
- **Costa Rica:** Boiler, Moin.
- **Croatia:** Tolero
- **Ecuador:** Guayaquil, Contecon, Puerto Bolivar, Puerto Esmeraldas, Posorja
- **France:** Le Harve, Dunkirk, Marseille
- **Germany:** Hamburg, Bremerhaven
- **Greece:** Thessaloniki
- **India:** Gujarat Mundra
- **Iran:** Bandar Abbas, Shahid Rajaei, Chabahar
- **Kenya:** Mombasa

- **Morocco:** Tangier, Casablanca
- **Mexico:** Veracruz, Ensenada, Manzanillo, Altamira Mazatlan, Lazaro Cardenas, Matamoros, Tampico
- **Montenegro:** Bar
- **Mozambique:** Pemba, Nacala, Beira, Maputo
- **Netherlands:** Rotterdam
- **Panama:** Colon, Porto Obaldia, Manzanillo International Terminal (MIT), Panama Port Company (PCC), Balboa e Cristobal, Porto PSA, and Porto Almirante (Bocas del Toro)
- **Paraguay:** Asuncion “La Villeta” Waterway
- **Peru:** Lima and Piura
- **Portugal:** Leixoes, Lisbon, Setubal, Sines
- **UK:** Felixstowe, Limon Portbury
- **Republic of Santo Domingo:** Caucedo
- **Romania:** Constance
- **Senegal:** Dakar
- **South Africa:** Durban, Cape Town, Inner Harbour of City Deep, Johannesburg
- **Spain:** Valencia, Algeiras, Barcelona, Las Palmas
- **Tanzania:** Dar es Salaam
- **Turkey:** Istanbul Ambarli Istanbul Pendik, Mersin, Kocaeli and Antalya
- **Uruguay:** Montevideo

Source: Libera Processing of DCSA Data, 2023

2

CRIME IN THE PORT SECTOR: A SNAPSHOT FROM 2022

2.1 Case numbers and geography

During 2022, there were **140 cases of crime within Italian ports, about one episode every 3 days** with the involvement of 29 ports in which criminal incidents occurred, including 23 of national importance, which correspond to 40%.

The snapshot, that returns a shrinking trend of the phenomenon, emerges through analysis of Customs Agency and Guardia di Finanza press releases, and from the Assoporti press review, from which all references to criminal emergence have been extracted.

Of the 140 cases, 85.7% (120) concern illegal importing of goods or products, 7.9% (11) concern illegal exporting of goods or products, 2.9% (4) concern seizures of goods in transit, while the rest relate to other illegal phenomena that cannot be classified.



LIST OF PORTS AND NUMBER OF EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN EACH OF THEM

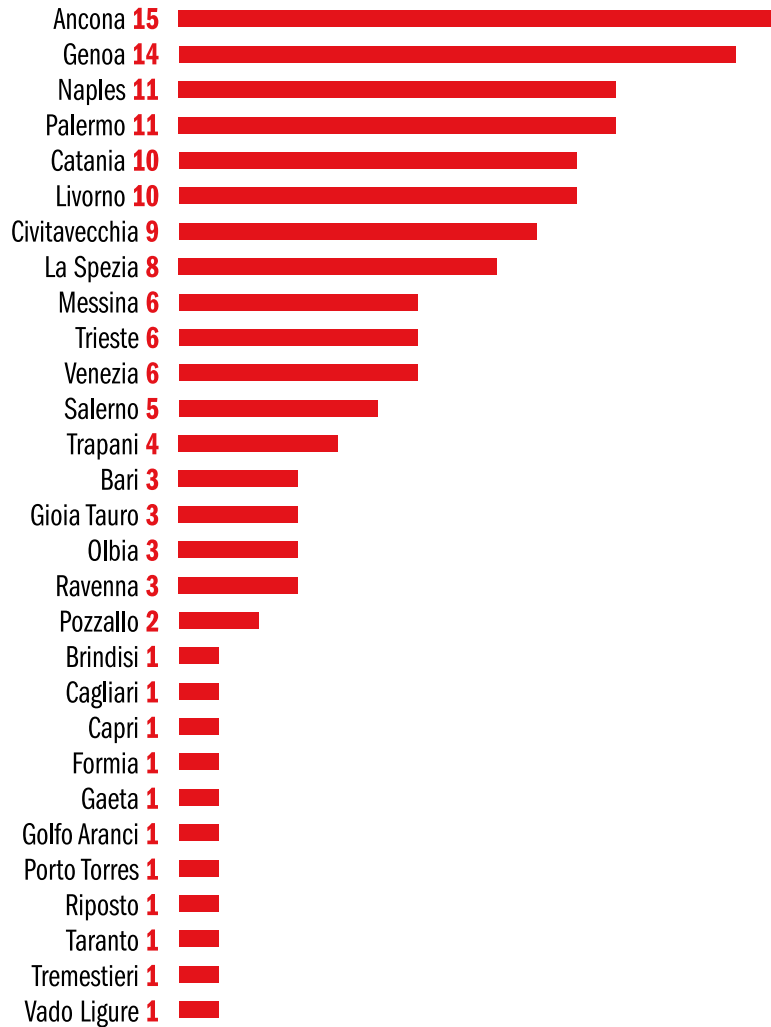


FIGURE 1 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoportori Data

CRIME EVENTS IN PORTS

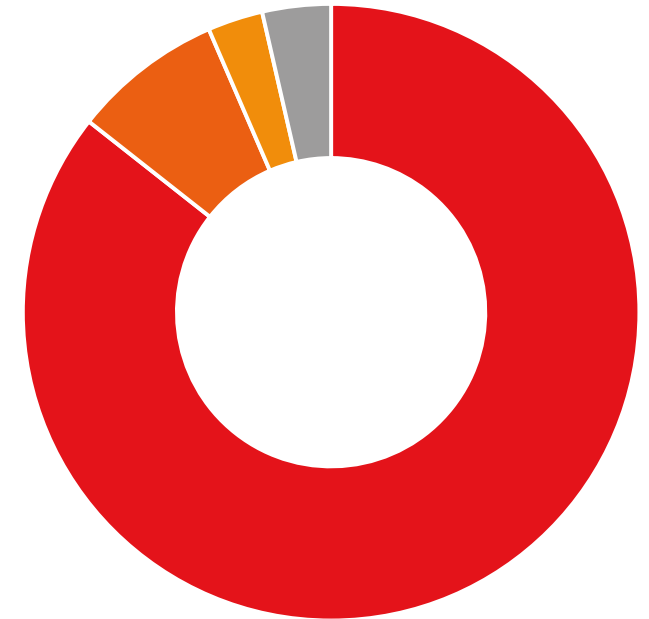


FIGURE 2 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoportori Data

The graph shows the list of ports and the number of events that took place in each port.

Analysing activities by criminal actors, we can see that only a small part (4) concerns infiltration into the port's legal economy, while **in 136 cases** these are **illegal activities**.

With regard to the first aspect, criminal infiltration took place mainly in the construction and civil engineering sector. The three cases concern the ports of Riposto (Catania), Formia (Latina) and Gaeta (Latina), and refer to fraud in supplies for rebuilding the tourist port or to tax damage caused by the failure to conduct important work. It is important to point out that the events always involve public actors such as

officials, managers or administrators, who exchange resources with entrepreneurs and private professionals, essential for this type of business. The latest case concerns an illegal activity at the port of Ancona, which led to the seizure of part of the docks and boats moored there.

Looking at the illicit markets, on the other hand, the overview is much more articulated and complex. **The data that stands out most concerns trafficking in counterfeit goods, equal to 49.3% of mapped cases, followed by drug trafficking with 23.2% and smuggling with 11.6%.** To a marginal extent, episodes related to currency offences (5.8%), illicit waste trafficking (2.9%), financial crime and animal trafficking (both at 2.2%), receiving stolen goods (1.4%),

- 49.3%**
trafficking in counterfeit goods
- 23.2%**
drug trafficking
- 11.6%**
smuggling
- 5.8%**
currency offences
- 2.9%**
illicit waste traffic
- 2.2%**
financial crime
- 2.2%**
animal traffic
- 1.4%**
receiving stolen goods

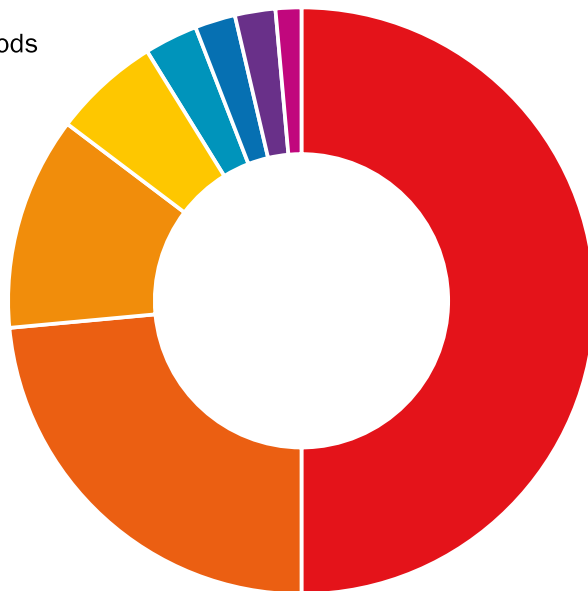


FIGURE 3 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoporti Data

arms trafficking and money laundering (both at 0.7%) follow.

According to the data collected, in most cases the investigators were able to identify criminal events thanks to the customs control activities (on 120 cases, 85.7%). Only in a few cases, according to press releases, the episodes are the result of national (11) or international (7) investigations.

2.2. A look at illegal markets

There are drugs for everyone - In the case of **drug trafficking**, illegally trafficked goods are different and **affect all Italian coastal areas: the islands, the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian Seas, and the Adriatic Sea.**

The dataset shows handling of three substances: **marijuana, hashish and cocaine.** As shown in the graph, in this context, cocaine seems to be the drug type that occurs most often in criminal events in the port area, followed by hashish, while in other limited cases the transport involves more than one substance at a time.

As these are different illegal markets, it is useful to try to analyse each traffic type in more detail.

Only one case involved an attempt to export the drug, regarding 17 kg of marijuana loaded in the port of Pozzallo hidden on a vehicle embarked on a ferry and bound for Malta.

- 68.6%**
cocaine
- 12.5%**
hashish
- 6.3%**
hashish, cocaine
- 6.3%**
hashish, marijuana
- 3.1%**
marijuana, cocaine
- 3.1%**
marijuana

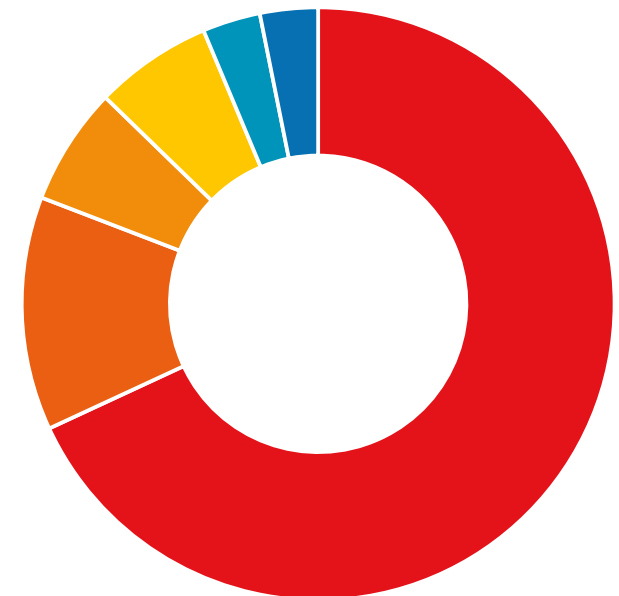


FIGURE 4 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoporti Data

Marijuana was also seized on two occasions as part of operations that also led to the discovery of hashish. The first case concerns an import from the port of Barcelona to that of Civitavecchia: 120 kg of narcotics were concealed in a vehicle loaded on a ferry. The second case, on the other hand, involved the port of Catania and the import of 21 kg of goods. Finally, on one occasion 11 kg of marijuana was seized (with another 9 kg of cocaine) in Tremestieri, inside a half-load of fruit and vegetables from Reggio Calabria.

According to the data collected, hashish was imported by ferry, or by hiding the drug in the spaces available in the vehicle or passengers' luggage. A cargo arriving in Palermo from Livorno, consisted of 70 kg hidden in a cavity of a tractor, placed inside 3 bags and divided into 14 packages. Another cargo, arriving at the port of Messina from the nearby port of Reggio Calabria, was hidden in the luggage of a man travelling on a bus from central Italy (50 bricks of 100 grams each of hashish). Two other loads, on the other hand, concerned the Barcelona-Civitavecchia connection. In the first case, a transporter was stopped with 4 bags containing 551 bricks of hashish (54 kg total); in the second case, the load was 467 kg, hidden in the pallet racks of a truck, divided into blocks covered with gasoline-soaked material to make checks more difficult.

Two events concerned the seizure of hashish and cocaine. The first was in the port of Capri, in the luggage of a passenger boarded on a ferry from Naples. The second was in the port of Gioia Tauro, as part of an international investigation that revealed a complex criminal organisation, with 24 suspects, engaged in trafficking between

South America and northern Italy.

The numerous cocaine trafficking cases allow a more articulated analysis of the phenomenon. First, it is necessary to place the 22 events, which involved as many as 12 ports: Livorno and Messina in three cases, Civitavecchia, Gioia Tauro, Olbia, Salerno, Naples and Trieste in two cases, in addition to La Spezia, Genoa, Catania and Vado Ligure.

The first piece of information of interest concerns the type of vessel used for the mobilisation of illicit goods.

In three cases, the traffickers used the ferries to import cocaine from Reggio Calabria to Messina. The loads were 1.5 kg, 7 kg and 4.7 kg, respectively. In the latter case, the drug was hidden in a false bottom under the car seats of the truck driver accused of trafficking.

On three other occasions, the boat used was the RORO, a specialized ferry-ship for the transport of wheeled vehicles. Even this mode of transport seems to have been used only for one section, which connects Livorno with Sardinia, in particular with Olbia. In two cases, 9 kg and 12 kg were found hidden inside a truck, on the Livorno - Olbia route. In another case, 20 kg were hidden in a refrigerated truck containing flour and various foods, headed from Livorno to Olbia, but intercepted at Livorno's port.

On the other hand, most of the episodes mapped (as many as 16) refer to cocaine trafficking using container ships as a means of transport. Of these, 13 concern import cases, while 3 concern cases of cocaine seizure in transit (from La Spezia to Spain, from Gioia Tauro to Greece and from

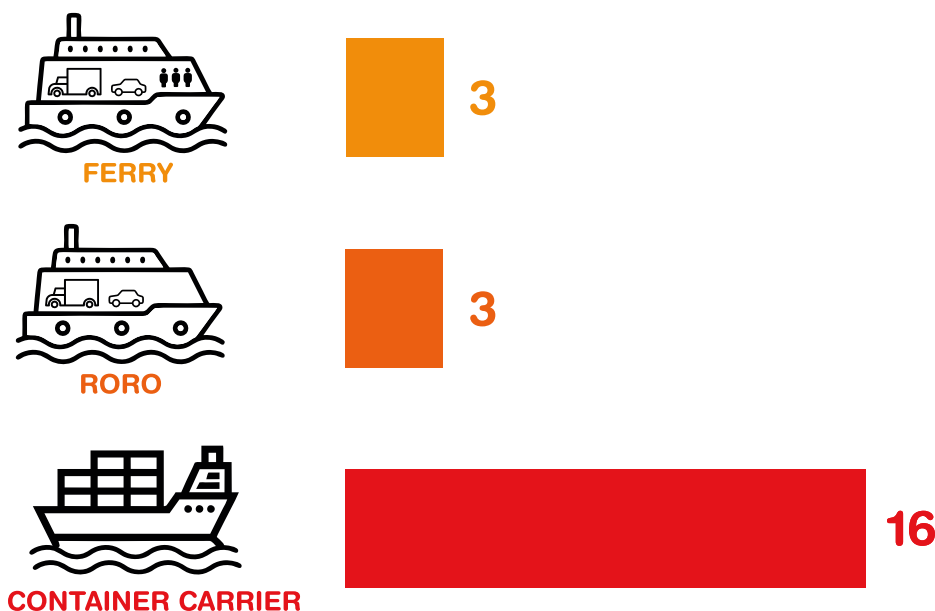


FIGURE 5 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoport Data

Civitavecchia to Salerno). The origin of the findings varies: in 7 cases from customs controls, in 5 from national investigations and in 4 from international investigations.

Among the cases of trafficking by container ships, however, profound differences are noted in the place of concealment used. Considering only the loads that had Italy as their final destination (that is, 13 events), in 6 cases the cocaine was hidden with the transported goods, in two cases it was inserted in specially obtained false bottoms, in one case it was hidden in the ship's structure, and for four events there is no information.

The case of concealment within the ship's structure is emblematic and concerns the port of Naples. In a ship under mainten-

ce, a load of 88 kg of cocaine was recovered hidden inside a "sea-chest"; that is, that part of the boat that allows water to be taken from the sea for cooling engines or other utilities. The drug was divided into more than 70 bricks and two bottles as liquid.

The episodes in which the cocaine was placed in false bottoms concerned two loads. The first was destined for Livorno from Malta consisting of 158 kg hidden in the roof of a container and divided into 140 bricks; the second, of 110 kg, was hidden in a bulkhead of a container containing fruit and destined for Catania from Ecuador.

The cases of concealment of cocaine with the transported goods concern Genoa, Trieste, Salerno, Civitavecchia and Vado Ligu-

re. In one case the load of 444 kg was divided into bricks stored inside bags; in other cases the drug was in loads of bananas, fruit or coffee; while in one case, bricks of brick total of 240 kg were sewn inside leather, covered with salt, heat-sealed and put under vacuum.

It has been seen that the traffic of cocaine by ferry concerns the connections between Calabria and Messina; by RORO, the connections are between Sardinia and Tuscany; international traffic is by container ship. It is therefore possible to note the different use of various legal maritime transport lines to market illicit goods. The traffickers' methods are therefore closely linked to the lawful traffic types that characterise the different ports of call.

“Journeys” of counterfeit merchandise - Cases involving trafficking in counterfeit goods represent a very high percentage of the total number of criminal incidents that took place in port. **68 episodes** were recorded in 2022, including **1 export, 1 transit and 66 imports**.

The export case concerns the attempt to transport a cloned car; that is, having features and documents identical to the original ones, of which the owner was unaware, on a ferry departing from Genoa.

The episode related to the seizure of goods in transit took place in Taranto and concerned a cargo of oil of about 450000 litres from Latvia and bound for Spain. This action is part of a broader international investigation that led to the arrest of three people, including entrepreneurs.

In general, the type of counterfeit goods that have been seized is quite varied. The chart below shows the number of events

for each product type.

Trafficking of counterfeit food has touched the ports of La Spezia, Livorno, Salerno, Civitavecchia, Brindisi, Genoa, Palermo and Ancona, with goods from African countries such as Egypt (oranges), Ethiopia, Nigeria (feed) and Tunisia (dried tomatoes and olive oil), Middle Eastern countries such as Oman (fish products) or the Mediterranean area such as Greece (molluscs).

Counterfeit textile products, on the other hand, in most cases involved attempts to import counterfeit brands or garments with incorrect production indications on the label. The ports where this contraband arrived are Venice (3 times), Catania and Genoa (2 times), Bari, La Spezia, Trieste and Genoa (1 time). In four cases, the goods were arriving from China and Greece, on one occasion from Turkey (for one of the events it was not possible to identify the State of departure).

With regard to the traffic of electronic material, in as many as seven out of eight cases the origin is Chinese, while in one case only the goods come from Turkey. Also in this case, the destination ports are distributed throughout Italy: Genoa and Naples (twice) Trieste, Catania, Livorno and Ancona (once). Even in the case of home accessories, the country of origin of the goods is often China (5 times out of 7), while the ports of destination, with the exception of the two episodes of La Spezia and Catania, are in the Adriatic area: Ancona, Ravenna and Venice. Counterfeit toys, on the other hand, are always of Chinese origin.

If we analyse all the episodes from which countries the counterfeit goods arrive in Italy, China is the main export country (32 events), followed by Greece and Turkey (7

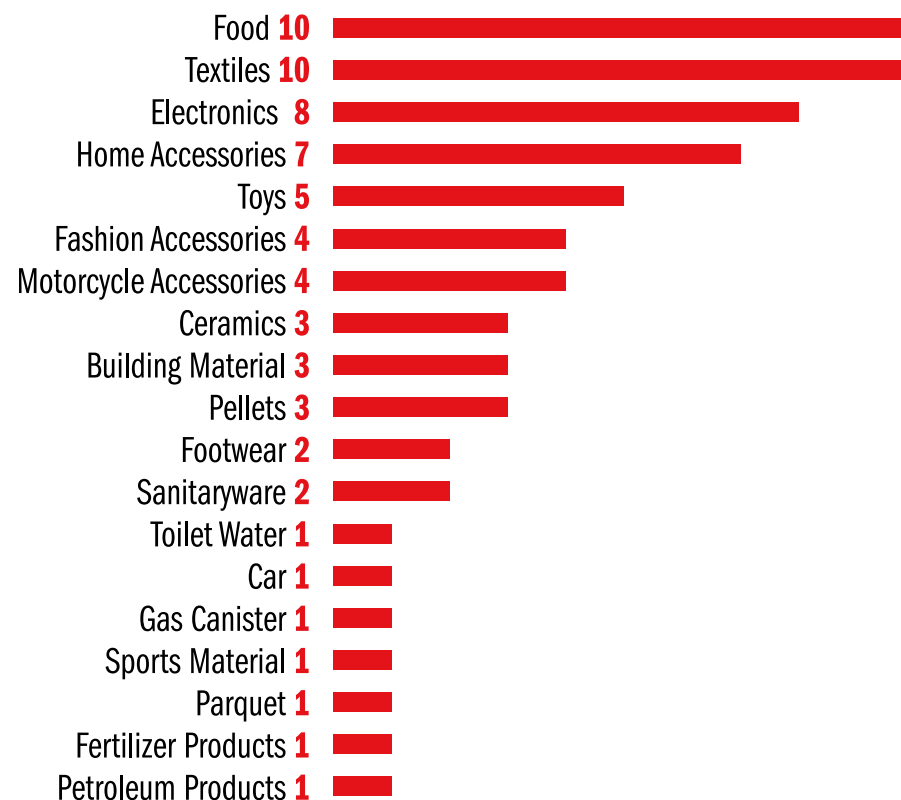


FIGURE 6 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoport Data

events), Egypt and Tunisia (3 events).

Alongside these events are also a couple of cases of receiving stolen goods. Both took place in the port of Livorno and are linked to traffic of counterfeit goods arriving in Italy, on one occasion from Tunisia, on the other from Bangladesh. The business revolved around the import of textiles; 3000 sweaters in one case, and more than 25,000 items of clothing in the other.

Smuggling of every stripe - Among other

illicit activities, smuggling of various goods also plays an important role. **Smuggling cases have affected several regions: Sardinia, Sicily, Puglia, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Liguria, Marche, Lazio**. This variety also concerns the type of goods traded, which can be summarised in three categories: **food, cars, cigarettes and tobacco**.

In the first category, we find episodes related to the import or export of fish products, sometimes derived from illegal fishing, such as 4.5 tons of crustaceans, 3.7 tons

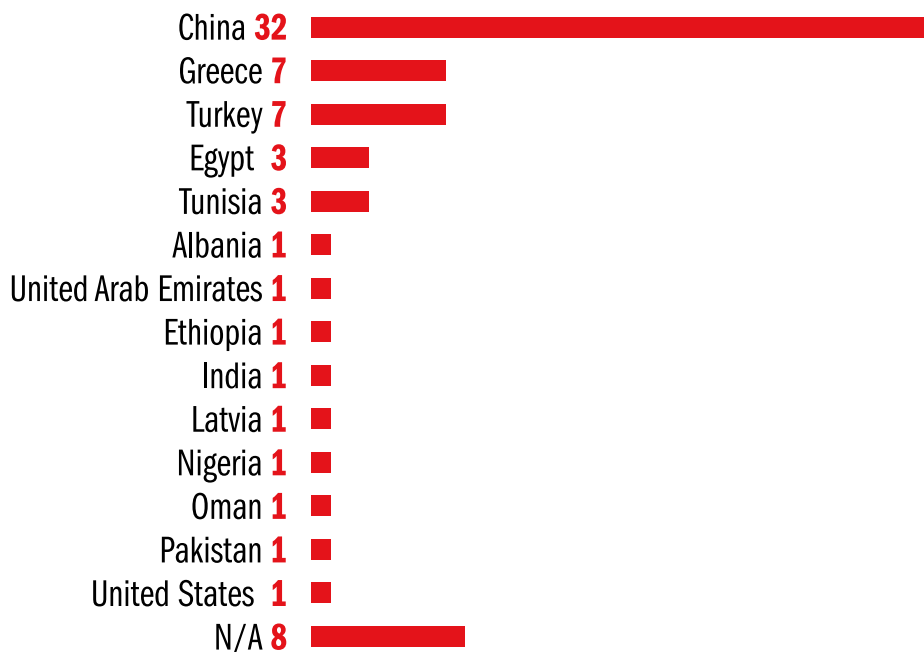


FIGURE 7 | Source: Libera Processing of ADM, GDF, Assoport Data

of sea cucumbers, 50 kg of juveniles or 90 kg of various products. Bari, Golfo Aranci, Trapani and Catania are the ports involved.

Looking instead at smuggled cars, we see attempts to import them by ferry, in the ports of Porto Torres and Genoa, or by container ships, as in the case of Civitavecchia, where a cargo from China of 28 electric cars was intercepted without authorisation to enter and use the brand. In only one case did the smuggling involve the attempted transfer of two Range Rovers to Albania

via the port of Ancona.

Smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco products has always involved attempts to import into Italy. Greece, Malawi, Albania and Turkey are the countries from which the trade originates, arriving mainly in the islands and ports of call of the Adriatic Sea. The methods of import are also diverse: by ferry to Bari, Messina and Olbia; by RORO to Ancona and Trieste; in the latter port of call, an attempt to import also by container was registered.

Illegal Waste - Particularly interesting is **illicit trafficking of waste**, which, in the Italian case, is peculiar: **it concerns exclusively goods destined for other countries**. There are four episodes mapped in 2022, all of which involve Italy exporting the waste of its production and consumption abroad. In this limited caseload, two regions are represented: Campania, with three episodes, and Liguria, with one episode.

A first event concerns the departure from Naples to Africa of a cargo formally registered as used goods and personal effects. Inside the container used for shipping was mechanical and electrical material that had not been properly disposed of. The other case related to the Neapolitan port concerned the export to Burkina Faso of 60 tonnes of vehicle accessories and used textile products, registered as non-polluting products. In the port of Salerno, on the other hand, there was an attempt to send engines and disassembled parts of mechanical vehicles inside which there were still oils, lubricants and highly polluting and dangerous substances, despite the fact that formally everything was already properly cleaned. Finally, a contractor, providing false statements about the contents of the shipment, attempted to send about 37 tons of electronic waste material from Genoa to Singapore.

Weapons and money - **The only case of arms trafficking and recycling took place in the port of Civitavecchia**, where in a ferry from Olbia the investigators' intervention blocked the attempt to import a 7.65 calibre gun of Belgian manufacture Browning with 19 cartridges, and banknotes of various denominations for over 210 thousand

euros. The driver of the vehicle in which the illicit goods were found was charged with illicit arms trafficking and money laundering.

African animals - **Illicit trafficking of animals**, on the other hand, **affected** in all three cases of **connections between Italy and Tunisia**. In one episode, there was an attempt to export 5 goldfinches from Palermo on a ferry to the African country, while in the other two cases, also located in Palermo and Genoa, the attempt involved the import of protected turtles on Italian territory.

No tax - Ports, however, can be a relevant space not only for trade activities (including illegal ones), but also for the criminal opportunities offered by the specific system that regulates infrastructures, which may concern **financial or currency offences**.

Financial crime concerned **two regions, Sicily** (with the ports of Messina and Trapani) **and Tuscany** (with the port of Livorno). The event in Messina concerned the dispute of the offence of tax evasion against a maritime and coastal passenger transport company for having improperly profited from benefits between 2016 and 2018. An equivalent of approximately one million euros was seized from the company. In the port of Trapani, on the other hand, the episode concerned an import of diesel fuel exempt from taxation which, according to the investigators, was not completely delivered to the recipients, while the inventories were reused creating an additional profit. In Livorno, the financial offence was linked to the under-invoicing for the import of textile products, about 3000 sweaters, from Tunisia.

Money, money - The currency crime cases, on concerned the attempt to import currency on six occasions (through Catania, Pozzallo, Ancona, Genoa and Palermo), while on only two occasions the attempt concerned export activities. Aside from one case, where money was traced to within a crew member's luggage, in all cases these events happened in passenger ferry

connections.

Export attempts took place in the ports of Palermo and Genoa, on boats to Tunisia. In the other cases, the goods' states of origin were Malta (towards the ports of Catania and Pozzallo) and Greece (towards the port of Ancona).



THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE (EPPO)



Since June 2021, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) has been operational in Italy. It is an independent institution of the European Union that has the competence to investigate and prosecute crimes that damage the financial interests of the EU, before the competence of national authorities. The role of EPPO, although limited, is in continuity with the protection of producers and the European market and is relevant in the port sector. Also by virtue of an agreement with the Monopolies and Customs Agency signed in February 2022, several EPPO investigations that concerned Italian ports and that made it possible to reveal different mechanisms to circumvent tax regulations, mainly related to fraud on the payment of VAT.

2.3 A snapshot from the ports

As highlighted, ports are a space where illegal traffics find opportunities for development in different areas. Ports, therefore, represent a unique opportunity for common and organized crime to profit and strengthen collusive ties both locally and internationally. This section takes us on a journey with some brief insights into the Italian ports most affected by criminal events during 2022.

criminal business (10 episodes) **is the illicit trafficking of counterfeit goods**, which sees China (6 times), Turkey and Albania (1 time) as the main countries of departure of products, while in two other episodes the data is missing. The events concerning the currency offence both refer to connections with Greece.



Port of Genoa

In the port of Genoa, **14 criminal events** have been recorded.

Also in this case, the main criminal business is illicit trafficking of counterfeit goods (8 events), 5 times coming from China. **Two cases**, on the other hand, **concern the illicit trafficking of waste**, as many as those related to currency offences. Numerically residual are drug trafficking, smuggling and animal trafficking.



Port of Ancona

In the port of Ancona, 13 events involving import activities emerged; one was of export (relating to a smuggling case) and one not determined. **The most recurrent**



Port of Naples

In the port of Naples, 11 criminal events have emerged. Most of these (7) concern the import of counterfeit goods from China (5 cases), India and the United Arab Emirates. **It is also relevant to report two cases of illicit drug trafficking, in particular cocaine.** As far as criminal businesses in the export business are concerned, there are two episodes of illegal waste trafficking.

Port of Palermo

A variety of criminal events are recorded in the port of Palermo. Five cases concern the import of counterfeit goods, with routes different from those that have emerged so far: two events concern connections with Tunisia, one with India, one with China, while one remains undetermined. Two incidents emerge regarding illicit currency, and another two to the illicit trafficking of animals. On the other hand, there are individual cases of cigarette smuggling and drug trafficking (hashish).

Port of Catania

The criminal phenomena affecting the port of Catania seem to refer exclusively to import activities. In five cases it is counterfeit goods (almost always from China), in two cases it is narcotics (cocaine, and hashish and marijuana), in two cases smuggling (of cigarettes and food), and in only one case currency crime.

Port of Livorno

Ten criminal events took place in the port of Livorno during 2022. Trafficking in counterfeit goods, 6 events, affects different countries in a widespread manner: Tunisia, Ethiopia, China, Oman, Bangladesh, Nigeria. Also noteworthy are the three cases of import of narcotics, all of them cocaine. Only one case concerns financial crime.

3

ORGANISED CRIME IN THE PORT SECTOR OVER TIME

From 2006 to 2022, more than one in seven Italian ports was caught under the radar of organized crime. Analysing the reports of the National Anti-Mafia Directorate and the Anti-Mafia Investigative Directorate, published between 2006 and 2022, **at least 54 Italian ports have been the subject of criminal interests, with the participation of at least 66 clans**, which have operated in illegal and legal business activities. The phenomenon has affected the whole country, from North to South. The DNA and the DIA have long reported criminal groups' reach into Italian and European ports to conduct activities both in the legal economy and in illicit markets, in particular in drug trafficking. **The mafias play an important role in this game, but they are not the only actors involved**, given that, especially for illegal trafficking, it is necessary the contribution of several non-criminal actors. These include producers, loaders, transfer operators, cargo receivers, operators in charge of their exit from the port area, and distributors.



CRIME PROLIFERATION IN ITALIAN PORTS OVER TIME

Liguria

Genova
Imperia
La Spezia
Loano
Ospedaletti
Rapallo
San Lorenzo al Mare
Savona
Vado Ligure
Ventimiglia

Toscana

Livorno

Lazio

Civitavecchia
Fiumicino
Ostia

Sardegna

Alghero
Arbatax
Cagliari
Olbia
Porto Torres

Campania

Granatello
Napoli
Salerno

Calabria

Amantea
Badolato
Cetraro
Corigliano Calabro
Crotone
Gioia Tauro
Isola Capo Rizzuto
Tropea



Friuli Venezia Giulia

Trieste

Veneto

Marghera
Venezia

Emilia Romagna

Ravenna

Marche

Ancona
Giulianova

Abruzzo

Ortona
Pescara
Vasto

Molise

Termoli

Puglia

Bari
Bisceglie
Brindisi
Giovinazzo
Monopoli
Taranto

Sicilia

Augusta
Acitrezza
Catania
Palermo
Porto Empedocle
Porto Isola
Pozzallo
Trapani

Source: Libera processing of DNA (2006-2018) and DIA (2019-2022) data



The list shows that organized crime interests within the ports are widespread throughout the country, from North to South, in the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coasts, regardless of the region in which the port is located. The centrality of trade routes, as well as the permeability of the socio-economic fabric, have made some ports of call more attractive than others. In addition, in recent years, some ports, for example Vado Ligure, have found more and more space. This may suggest a process of diversification and expansion of organized crime activities also in different ports. Such a trend can occur for several reasons, certainly linked to port operations: the economic dimension, the political and institutional context, the criminal opportunities created by the actors operating within the area. **Not only the geographical element makes the difference, but the port context.**

In the review, **it was also possible to highlight which criminal organisations that over time have expressed some form of interest in the port area**, both to conduct illegal activities and to infiltrate the legal economy. Among them, **the traditional Italian mafias stand out: 'Ndrangheta, Camorra and Cosa Nostra.** However, other criminal organisations of Italian origin also appear: the Magliana gang, the Sacra Corona

Unita and Bari criminal groups. There are also interests of different groups indicated exclusively by geographical origin (either because they conduct the main activities, or because of the members' territorial origin) such as Asians, Eastern Europe, North Africa, or by specifying the country of origin, Albania, China, Mexico and Nigeria.

Information on criminal groups is sometimes fragmented and it is not possible to conduct a detailed analysis. In some reports, however, the level of detail is greater and references are found both regarding the criminal matrix of the organisation, and to the group or clan involved.

Trying to focus attention precisely on the mafia actors, the tables presented below offers a summary of the findings, highlighting each group (in the legal or illegal business) and the port in which it operates.

Sometimes the different groups' criminal activities occur again in different years and times, so certain data are repeated within the table.

CALABRIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Tropea	La Rosa	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Other service activities related to maritime transport
Gioia Tauro	Alvaro	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Piomalli; Alvaro; Crea; Molè	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Isola Capo Rizzuto	Arena	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Preparation of the construction site and arrangement of the land
Gioia Tauro	Alvaro; Piomalli; Molè	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Molè; Pesce; Piomalli	Chinese OC; 'Ndrangheta	Traffic in counterfeit products	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Alvaro; Piomalli; Molè	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Molè	'Ndrangheta	Extorsion	Movement of goods related to maritime transport
Gioia Tauro	Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Barbieri	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Cornigliano Calabro	Straface	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Public market management services
Gioia Tauro	Molè; Pesce; Piomalli	Chinese OC; 'Ndrangheta	Trafficking in Counterfeit Products; Smuggling of cigarettes and TLE	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Molè; Pesce; Piomalli	Chinese OC; 'Ndrangheta	Trafficking in Counterfeit Products; Smuggling of cigarettes and TLE	N/A

Gioia Tauro	Piromalli; Molè	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro; Livorno	Mancuso	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Cornigliano Calabro	Straface	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Public market management services
Gioia Tauro	Pesce; Bellocco	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking; Usury; Extortion; Arms trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Molè; Pesce; Piromalli	Chinese OC; 'Ndrangheta	Trafficking in Counterfeit Products; Smuggling of cigarettes and TLE	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Alvaro	'Ndrangheta; Italian	N/A	Movement of goods related to maritime transport
Gioia Tauro	Pesce; Pesce-Oppedisano; Varca	'Ndrangheta; Colombian OC	Drug trafficking	Other services activities related to maritime transport
Gioia Tauro	Fidanzati	'Ndrangheta; Cosa Nostra	Drug trafficking	N/A
Cornigliano Calabro	Straface	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Public market management services
Crotone	Vrenna; Ciampà; Bonaventura; Megna; Farao; Marincola; Grande Aracri	'Ndrangheta	Extorsion	Land transport
Gioia Tauro	letto; Cua; Pipicella	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	Other services activities related to maritime transport
Gioia Tauro	Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A

Gioia Tauro	Pesce; Molè	'Ndrangheta	Traffic in counterfeit products	Other services activities related to maritime transport; Land transport
Gioia Tauro	letto; Cua; Pipicella; Commiso; Aquino; Coluccio	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Brandimarte	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Pesce; Molè	'Ndrangheta	Drug Trafficking; Counterfeit Goods Trafficking	Other services activities related to maritime transport; Land transport
Gioia Tauro	Mancuso; Pesce; Bellocco; Piromalli; Alvaro	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Gioia Tauro; Genoa	Avignone; Paviglianiti	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Alvaro; Coluccio; Aquino	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Crotone	Grande Aracri; Ciampà; Barilari	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Other services activities related to maritime transport; Land transport
Tropea	Mancuso	'Ndrangheta	N/A	Maritime passenger transport
Gioia Tauro	Mancuso	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Livorno, Naples, Salerno; Gioia Tauro	Molè; Piromalli; Alvaro; Crea	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Commiso; Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Tassone	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking; money laundering	N/A
Cetraro	Muto	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Badolato	Gallace	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A

Badolato	Gallace	'Ndrangheta	Extorsion	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Assisi; Agresta	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Casalesi	'Ndrangheta; Camorra	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Bellocco	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Bellocco	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Nirta; Barbaro; Pelle; Giorgi	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Cacciola; Grasso	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro	Morabito-Palamara-Bruzzaniti; Amato-Pagano	'Ndrangheta; Camorra	Drug trafficking	N/A

CAMPANIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Naples	Casalesi; Mazzarella; Secondigliano Alliance	Chinese OC; Camorra	Traffic in counterfeit products	N/A
Naples	Mazzarella	Chinese OC; Camorra	Traffic in counterfeit products	N/A
Naples	Mazzarella	Chinese OC; Camorra	Traffic in counterfeit products	N/A
Livorno, Naples, Salerno; Genoa; Gioia Tauro	Molé; Piromalli; Alvaro; Crea	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Salerno	Annunziata-Aquino	Camorra	Cigarette and TLE smuggling; drug trafficking	N/A
Naples	Montescuro	Camorra	Extorsion	N/A
Naples	Di Lauro	Camorra	Cigarette and TLE smuggling	N/A

FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Trieste	Iona	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A

LIGURIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
La Spezia	Beer	Camorra	Illicit waste traffic	N/A
La Spezia	Romeo-Siviglia	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
La Spezia	Romeo-Seville	'Ndrangheta	N/A	N/A
Palermo; La Spezia	Galatolo	Cosa Nostra	N/A	Shipbuilding
Gioia Tauro; Genoa	Avignone; Paviglianiti	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Bellocco	'Ndrangheta; Albanian OC; Italian OC	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Martino	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Avignone	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Livorno, Naples, Salerno; Genoa; Gioia Tauro	Molé; Piromalli; Alvaro; Crea	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Alvaro; Bellocco; Gallico; Mancuso	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Bellocco-Pesce	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Alvaro	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Gulf Clan	Colombian OC	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Avignone	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Alvaro	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Genoa	Bellocco	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A

PUGLIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Giovinazzo	Capriati	Puglia OC	N/A	Control of economic activities
Bari	Capriati	Puglia OC	N/A	Other services activities related to maritime transport; Private surveillance services
Bisceglie	Griner; Palermiti-Milella; Parisi	Puglia OC	Drug trafficking	N/A

SICILIA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Palermo; La Spezia	Galatolo	Cosa Nostra	N/A	Shipbuilding
Acitrezza; Catania	Nizza; Santapaola	Cosa Nostra; Albanian OC	Drug trafficking	N/A

TOSCANA

Port	Group Name	Consortium name	Business Illegal	Business Legal
Livorno	Barbaro; La Torre	'Ndrangheta; Camorra	Drug trafficking	N/A
Gioia Tauro; Livorno	Mancuso	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Livorno, Naples, Salerno; Genoa; Gioia Tauro	Molé; Piromalli; Alvaro; Crea	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A
Livorno	Bellocco; Molè-Piromalli	'Ndrangheta	Drug trafficking	N/A

TAB 1 | Source: Libera processing of DNA (2006-2018) and DIA (2019-2022) data

If we look at the criminal clans involved, we can say that in the port area **in the last 17 years the criminal interests of 66 clans have emerged**, sometimes also active at the same time or confederated in cartels, who have operated in illegal and legal business activities.

If criminal infiltration activities in the legal economy are considered, there is a strong diversification among groups, both in terms of activities conducted and from a geographical point of view. **Cosa Nostra, for example, seems to be interested in activities related to shipbuilding in the ports of Palermo and La Spezia.** Criminal groups of Apulian origin, on the other hand, are interested in the control of economic activities in Giovinazzo, or companies linked to maritime transport and private surveillance services in Bari. **The 'Ndrangheta is the mafia group capable of operating in a plurality of ports and many businesses**, some more traditional, related to construction (preparation of the construction site and arrangement of the land); others are more related to the port dimension: other service activities related to maritime transport, public market management services, movement of goods related to maritime transport and maritime passenger transport.

As far as illegal markets are concerned, the scenario is more articulated and the involvement of a plurality of organisations emerges. Some, such as those of Apulian and Colombian origin, seem to be involved exclusively in drug trafficking; others, such as ours or those of Chinese origin, are involved in the same market, but only in cases where there are also groups linked to the 'Ndrangheta. **Camorra groups and those of Chinese origin are involved** sometimes individually and sometimes jointly in

trafficking in counterfeit products or the smuggling of cigarettes and TLE.

The centrality of trade routes, as well as the permeability of the socio-economic fabric, have made some ports more attractive than others. This suggests that organized crime activities also diversify and expand in different ports of call... Not only the geographical element but the port context makes the difference.

Recurring in the references, the 'Ndrangheta groups operate in several illicit markets: waste trafficking, arms trafficking, cigarette and TLE smuggling, trafficking in counterfeit products, extortion and usury, and above all drug trafficking. The projections of the 'Ndrangheta seem to emerge both in the small Calabrian ports (Amantea, Badolato, Cetraro, Corigliano Calabro, Isola di Capo Rizzuto, Tropea, Crotona), and in the important hub of Gioia Tauro. Illegal activities, however, cross regional borders and involve other ports in Southern Italy (Naples and Salerno), Central Italy (such as Livorno) and the North-East (Venice and Trieste). **Liguria**, where the presence of the 'Ndrangheta seems to involve all the main commercial ports, seems particularly significant: Genoa, La Spezia and Vado Ligure.

4

CRIME IN PORT: ACTORS, DYNAMICS AND METHODS

The data presented so far demonstrate that ports are a particularly relevant area of interest for criminal groups and mafia clans. Clearly, **drug trafficking is among the most significant criminal businesses** in the port sector. The attention of the repressive systems is particularly focused here. A more in-depth study can help to better understand the mechanisms through which the mafias manage to exploit Italian ports and which actors are involved in the illicit market. Two distinct operations were analysed. The first, **"Carthage," dates back to 1995 and involves the port of Genoa.** The second, **"Tre Croci,"** was completed in **2022 and involves the port of Gioia Tauro.** In both cases, the corruption mechanisms within which criminal organizations have managed to enter are relevant. The illegal business was conducted through a network of hidden exchanges and the availability of personnel working in the port sector (both

on the dock and in the economic activities connected to it).

4.1 Genoa, Nineties: Operation Carthage

Although about thirty years have passed since the start of the investigations, coordinated by the Anti-Mafia District Directorate of Genoa, the "Carthage" operation shows the methods that mafia groups continue using today to infiltrate ports (Court of Turin, 1998). This involved a vast international drug traffic between South America and Europe, using the port of Genoa as the entry point for goods. According to the investigators' reconstruction, between the autumn of 1990 and March 1994 the organization managed to traffic about 10,000 kg of cocaine. This was divided into nine loads from Brazil, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia, hidden inside false bottoms or

bulkheads of containers containing candy, coffee, mineral oils, shoes and clothing. **On one occasion, the investigators' intervention led to the discovery of about 5,466 kg of cocaine, the largest seizure ever made up to that time.** The criminal enterprise was provided with stable and continuous financing by some 'Ndrangheta groups: Mazzafarro, Pesce, Cataldo, Morabito, Barbaro and Romola.

Some figures played the role of intermediaries, allowed these groups, in a variable way over time, to become a real cartel for importing the drug: "For cigarette smuggling, since the sums to be invested were very large, the betting system was invaded. That is, each mafia family participated in the financing according to their own availability and quotas were formed. The same thing happened with this traffic. If the cargo arrived, there was a profit; if it did not arrive, the invested capital was lost" (*ivi*, p. 1251).

These intermediaries acted as liaisons between the lenders and those who then materially dealt with release of the container from the port. This role was held by those with previous experiences of smuggling cigarettes, having handled it in the 1970s on behalf of the 'Ndrangheta Mazzafarro family. Two members of the Caruana clan belonging to Cosa Nostra ensured transfer of the goods to Italy. One had the task of finding the drug directly in South America; the other served as a reference for sharing information in Italy. **This collaboration among different mafia organizations took place at a time when international drug trafficking was undergoing some changes.** This complex investigation is based on international reports and coordination tables, in particular a report by the D.E.A.

(Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. agency) that was delivered to the DCSA.

Yet another group organized the supply chain in the whole affair and oversaw all phases of the operation, from the cargo's arrival in port until delivery. Among the main skills involved was therefore **the ability to structure an articulated network of subjects not necessarily affiliated with the funding organizations, able to conduct limited but necessary tasks.** In the port

The boss's cousin is able to activate a knowledge network to ask for real advice for starting the business. People willing to participate in corrupt exchanges allowed the criminal group to find solutions to problems.

was a cousin of one of the bosses, originally from Palmi (Reggio Calabria), but resident in Genoa, who had worked for a long time in a customs clearance company. He suggested the operating methods to avoid too invasive controls, especially in the phases in which the container containing the drug would transit the port area. The idea was to create a fictitious company that could import goods from Colombia or Central America and send them to Switzerland. This would make the goods appear only in transit, present reduced documentation and avoid customs clearance in Italy. Once outside of the port area, the container would stop at a previously identified warehouse, be emptied of the drug and, once the seals were put back, would leave for Switzerland. This method reduced the control risks to

sample checks only in the port area and road checks in the Italian territory.

Already in this phase of starting the criminal enterprise, the boss's cousin was able to activate a network of knowledge to ask for real advice for starting the business. **People willing to participate in corrupt exchanges allowed the criminal group to find solutions to problems.** The trial revealed the involvement of a Guardia di Finanza marshal (recently retired at the time of the events) who played a fundamental role. According to the judges' reconstructions, he devised the import method just described, to suggest the creation of a company that trafficked specific types of goods so that it did not raise suspicions for export from South America to Switzerland (i.e., American production and European consumption). He kept the organization informed about any sample checks and, if necessary, intervened so that the cargo could leave the port area without problems. His involvement was not sporadic and limited to individual import operations, but, according to the ruling, he guaranteed "indefinite and stable availability" (*Ibid*, p. 1230). The GF agent, moreover, was paid for each load transited, even if he did not actively make the container pass. The corruption mechanism was not based on a single exchange to be concluded immediately; there was the expectation that this could be prolonged over time. **The criminal group, therefore, did not buy the individual service, but the person's constant availability.** This is particularly significant because, despite already being retired, the military officer could guarantee the criminal group a strong professionalism and experience, which pre-emptively protects the group through preparation of a formally licit and

impeccable supply chain.

Legal economics - Already in the company incorporation phase the involvement of professionals and frontmen emerged. Then, even in the traffic management phase, the organization uses the skills of subjects belonging to the legal economy; therefore, **corrupt professionals and entrepreneurs, willing to do illegal business.** Although the goods' destination company was in the name of one of the organizers, it was necessary to request the services of a freight forwarder capable of guaranteeing the container's exit from the port, along with a transport company and a storage warehouse. **These figures were not necessarily aware of the movement's real purpose**, but, in the specific case, apart from the shipper, they supported the criminal group. In particular, the transport company guaranteed

The involvement of professionals and frontmen emerged in the company incorporation phase. Then, even in the traffic management phase, the organization uses the skills of subjects belonging to the legal economy; i.e., corrupt professionals and entrepreneurs, willing to do illegal business.

a route deviation of the route to take the container to a warehouse (after the first loads, the Arquata Scrivia interport would be identified, with the complicity of the then director) where the load would be recovered and the seals replaced away from possible inspections.

It is particularly interesting to analyse when the criminal organization's strategies fail, especially inside the port. It allows us to take into account their problem-solving and networking skills, i.e. their abilities to solve problems and build social bonds. **Often the setbacks depend on structural problems external to the group**, relating to the port, logistics and transport sectors. **These elements affect the legal economy**, as well as the illegal one. For example, during the group's last import of cocaine, the investigators had already activated monitoring and control of traffickers and the container containing the drug was stopped in port. Through a former smuggler, the organization was able to recruit a person willing to conduct customs clearance following the ordinary procedure, but when the attempt failed, he suggested to the traffic organizers a different way of recovering the cargo. They would steal the container from one of his collaborators who, in the event of a stop, would declare that he was unaware of the contents. The organizers excluded that option, preferring to operate within the port with the tools to legally operate within the port, therefore looking for shippers willing to intervene to bring out the container. They were aware of the real purpose of the movement and yet they were available to act in order to facilitate the criminal group's goal. In particular, the transport company guaranteed a deviation of the route to take the container to a warehouse (after the first loads, the interport of Arquata Scrivia would be identified, with the complicity of the then director) where the cargo would be recovered and the seals replaced away from possible controls.

Finally, an analysis of drug loads imported by traffickers indicates a process of lear-



ning, adapting and consolidating trafficking practices. This allowed the group to significantly increase the amount of cocaine handled. It went from the first test load of about 130 kg to the ninth load of 5466 kg. This progression, developed over time, was possible because the group's reputational capital was gradually consolidated and enriched, able to guarantee reliability also with regard to overseas exporters of the drug. At one point, some organization members even conceived the expansion of the group of lenders. This is not an obvious process, which finds its *raison d'être* in the group's ability to conduct the previous trades. It was an attempt to structure economies of scale that, with the same risks and organizational costs, allowed traffickers to move many more resources. **This system has grown and consolidated through the group's ability to accumulate social capital, experiences and skills.** This flow of drugs was interrupted and became evident not by errors in import logistics, but by external factors (Court of Appeal of Turin, 2000).

4.2 Gioia Tauro, 2022: the "Tre-Croci" operation

Among the main investigations completed in 2022, the one called "Tre Croci" (Court of Reggio Calabria 2022) shows some elements relating to the criminal organization's structure, communication methods and interaction mechanisms with actors in the legal economy that are particularly significant for research. The operation, conducted by the Guardia di Finanza and coordinated by the Anti-Mafia District Directorate of Reggio Calabria, **ended in October 2022 and involved 36 people accused** of various types of mafia-type crime and international drug trafficking. **Several provinces were involved: Vibo Valentia, Bari, Naples, Rome, Terni, Vicenza, Milan and Novara.** The investigation was part of @ON (Operational Network), the operational network for the international fight against organized and mafia-style criminal groups, which aims to strengthen transnational police cooperation, with the participation of Europol.

According to the investigators, the criminal organization was formed by an allian-

ce composed of a Neapolitan group (Imperiale & Carbone) and a group linked to the 'Ndrangheta (Bruzzaniti), engaged in finding, acquiring, importing and transporting **cocaine from South America to Italy through the port of Gioia Tauro.** The Neapolitan group included the so called "Van Gogh's boss" originally from Castellammare di Stabia (Naples), already captured in Dubai in August 2021 (DIA 2022b), as well as a prominent element of the Amato-Pagano clan. The Campania criminal group was involved, again in 2022, in another investigation related to international cocaine trafficking (more than a tonne handled), money laundering and reuse of proceeds.

An articulated network - The "Tre Croci" investigation revealed the activity of an Italian criminal network able to directly relate to influential Colombian drug traffickers, which was particularly skilled in terms of management of communications. These often took place in person and outdoors or through the use of radio transceivers. In addition, to reduce as much as possible the risk of being intercepted, group members used to communicate through "cryptophones" connected to closed circuit platforms, which were difficult to capture.

The Guardia di Finanza note states that **"The organization [...] was divided into three distinct levels** of subjects involved. **There were representatives of the main families of 'Ndrangheta**, able to guarantee the import of cocaine consignments arriving from South America; **coordinators of the teams of complicit port workers** who would pay the team with part of the "commission", varying between 7 and 20% of the cargo's value [...], **and port operators materially responsible for extracting the cocaine from the "contaminated" contain-**

ner and exfiltrating it to safe places” (GDF, Press release 6 October 2022).

The cocaine purchased in South America was then brought to Italy through container ships destined for the port of Gioia Tauro. There, the criminal organization had an operational structure composed of teams of port operators able to constantly support the group in finding and recovering cocaine from ships in transit to outside the port. **Fourteen corrupt dockers were involved in the investigation**, accused of having organised fraudulent management of containers handled in port, to be able to evade customs controls through the affixing of counterfeit seals, which should have guaranteed the cargo’s integrity. The mechanism required intermediaries to communicate to port workers the name of the ship and the reference code of the container in which the cocaine was hidden. Once it arrived at the dock, the container was disembarked and placed in a port area considered safe by the dockers. They provided for the opening and recovery of the drug, which was then inserted into a second container that was picked up by a transport company and taken to a warehouse available to the traffic managers. The investigators’ reconstruction shows the organisation’s complexity: “Specifically, having identified the landing suitable for the purpose, the ‘contaminated’ container was placed in front of the ‘exit’ container, leaving between the two only the distance necessary to open the doors for the movement of illicit goods. Above the two containers was placed a third, called ‘bridge,’ with the aim of hiding, even from above, the movements in the area below. Once the area was set up, to avoid arousing suspicion, the unfaithful dockers were transported to the operations

The port of Gioia Tauro can be considered as an hub in this operation, representing the gateway to Europe for imported drugs [...] not only for criminal organizations rooted in the Calabrian territory and in particular in the plain, but also for other Italian groups (especially in the Neapolitan area, some groups active in the Caivano’s Parco Verde, in the Traiano district and in the Vesuvian area) and foreigners.

site hidden inside a fourth container, which was placed in the same row where the structure had been set up. Finally, to prevent persons unrelated to the facts from hindering illegal operations, two straddle carriers (special vehicles used for the handling of containers), led by the suspects, were stationed on the sides of the row of containers where the bridge had been built, to prevent access and to monitor, from above, the possible arrival of the Law Enforcement Forces” (GDF, Press Release 6th October 2022).

In this investigation, **the role of a customs officer, in particular an operating officer at the anti-fraud service, is particularly relevant**. According to what emerged, **this person would have altered the results of the detections of the scanners within which the goods in transit from the port passed**. Their role and function allowed intervention to cover the abnormalities related to the cargo, **with compensation of about 3% of the illicit cargo’s value** (which on the

occasion amounted to 300 kg of cocaine). This corrupt mechanism allowed the group to go unpunished.

The variable between 7% and 20% - According to the prosecution, the dockers were at the service of several gangs: Piriomalli, Crea, Alvaro, Gallico, Ladini and Pedullà. For the service, the gangs paid between 7% and 20% of the cargo value; **the dockers would collect about 7 million euros**. During the investigation, **4 tons of cocaine were seized**, a preventive measure was conducted by equivalent (equal to about 7 million euros) along the entire corporate assets of two companies active in the transport sector.

The port of Gioia Tauro can be considered as an hub in this operation, representing **the gateway to Europe for imported drugs**. However, it is important to emphasize the particular role of supplying illicit goods not only for criminal organizations rooted in the Calabrian territory and in particular in the plain, but also for other Italian groups (especially in the Neapolitan area, some groups active in the Caivano’s Parco Verde, in the Traiano district and in the Vesuvian area) and foreigners. Once the drug was outside the port, clients were many and varied. Thus, the port of Gioia Tauro, and more generally the Italian ports, play a significant role not only for their geographical location and for the economies (even illicit) of that territory, but they are important as a nodes of a broader logistics chain, also criminal in this specific case. Thus, ports serve as a logistical base for a wider network of illegal economies.

4.3 How to retrieve the “stuff”

Among the methods of recovering the drug, in recent years, **the rip-on/rip-off technique** has characterized the Italian port system in a considerable way. A legal commercial vessel is used to transport drugs (usually cocaine) from the country of origin or from the port of transshipment to the port of destination, **without the shipowner and the shipping company necessarily being aware of it**.

This method relies on the availability of a group of people within the port. They, with their role, skills and abilities, can fetch the drugs from the containers, usually hidden either with the goods or in special bags placed near the door. The analysis shows how this practice is conducted in several Italian ports both in the North and in the South, also facilitating **criminal professionalization of dockers involved**. Port workers cyclically created team to recover drug in the main destination ports for cocaine such as Genoa, Gioia Tauro, Livorno, Vado Ligure. More or less formal illegality networks are strengthened by the common participation in repeated corrupt exchanges.

This recovery method is particularly interesting because it **allows the analysis of port operations and malfunctions**. First, the container undergoes several steps from the ship’s arrival until it leaves the port. These can be divided into four phases, as shown in this graph.

In the first phase, the ship berths and stands close to the dock, waiting for the crane to take the container. In the next step, the crane operator unloads the container from the ship and places it on the dock, close to the boat, where the rest of

the team is waiting. Once the container is on the platform, it can continue moving towards one of three routes: the outside, the control area and the storage area. The choice is based on the container's final destination, the operational programme defined by the terminal operator and control agencies' evaluations. From the control or storage area, the last step involves the container leaving the port or boarding another ship.

In maritime logistics, **the timing of this phase is extremely relevant**. Sailing times depend on the type of boat and the weather conditions. **Shippers prefer to use one trade route over another to reduce stopover times at the ports of call**. A similar reflection is also valid for illicit trafficking. From a macro perspective, that is, the traffic from the moment in which the goods are produced, transported and then distributed, the times are long. In the case

of drugs it can also take several months from production to consumption. Despite the long traffic times, the time element within the port becomes fundamental. Criminal groups have interest, in all types of traffic, to ensure that the goods do not stop at the port for long. **The longer the stay, the higher is the risk of possible controls** in an area particularly monitored by public authorities. This assumption is particularly significant in the rip-on/rip-off technique, since insertion of the drug into the container often takes place without the knowledge of the legal goods' recipient. Therefore, the organization must recover the drug extremely rapidly, in the time interval between unloading the container and escape from the port.

With the proposed scheme, three possible moments of intervention of the recovery team can be identified:

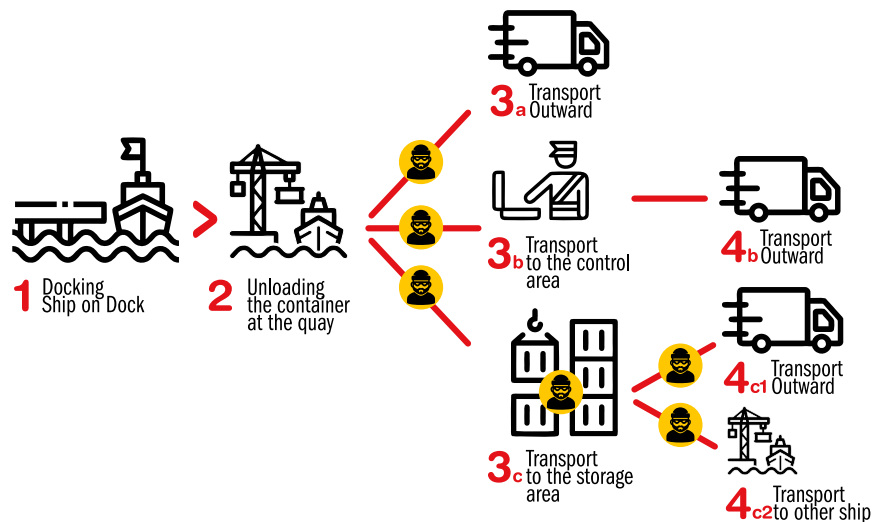


FIGURE 8 | Source: Libera processing of DNA (2006-2018) and DIA (2019-2022) data

A) At the intersection between phase 2 and phases 3a, 3b, 3c;

B) During phase 3c;

C) Between phase 3c and phases 4c1 and 4c2.

What professional figures can play a functional role in the recovery? It is possible to identify different actors that can facilitate, or prevent hindering, the activity. There are those who designate the work teams; plan movements (dispatcher), and comply with planning on the dock (checker). Then there is the crane operator; forklift driver, the driver of the Straddle Carrier, the hauler, yard operator (foreman), and the person

in charge of controls. Among these figures favouring drug trafficking, some can conduct official acts, while others act contrary to official duties. They may take an active or passive role. In some cases **it is not necessary for the person involved to engage in activities other than those required by their ordinary or daily work, since these can also contribute to the success of the traffic**. For example, the decision of how and where to move a container, work team planning, and the type of control to be conducted are the result of legitimate decision-making processes that, depending on how they operate, can support illicit trafficking. Below is a summary:

Roles and Actions of Port Workers to Facilitate Illegal Trafficking

Role/Action	Proceedings	Acts contrary to official duties
Active	Container movement Activity planning Work team planning	Container opening Physical recovery of the drug Information sharing Guarantee access to the area
Passive	Mere documentary check Decision not to conduct control	Avoid Checks Penalties Avoidance

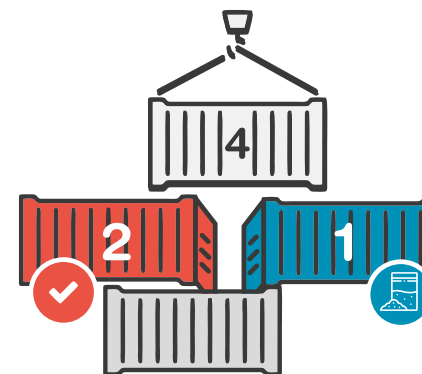
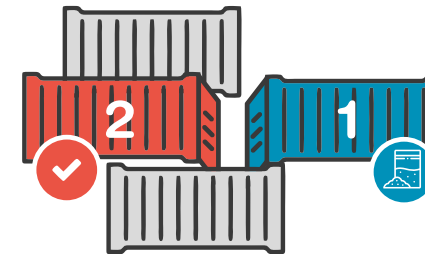
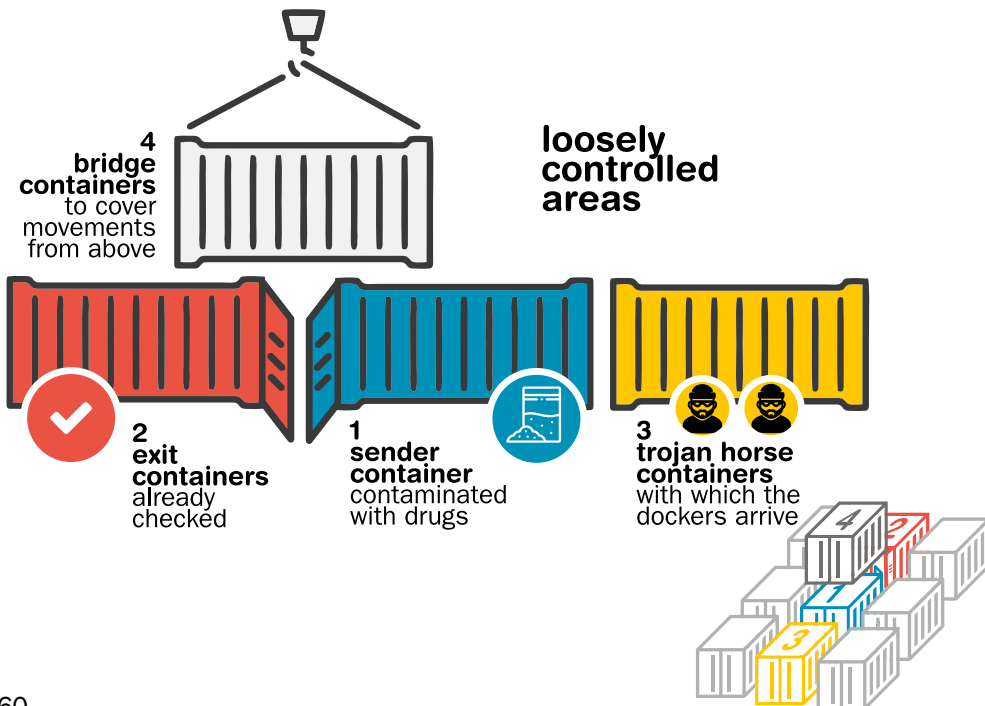
Of course, anyone participating in the recovery needs certain information related to the ship (name, date and time of docking, unloading planning), the individual container (reference alphanumeric symbol, route and destination, legal goods contained) and the concealed drug (quantity, concealment method). In addition to information, those who are materially involved in the recovery must have tools that allow them to operate quickly, camouflaging operations with port activity and leaving no trace. Equipment may consist of work tools such as shears and gloves for opening the seal, a

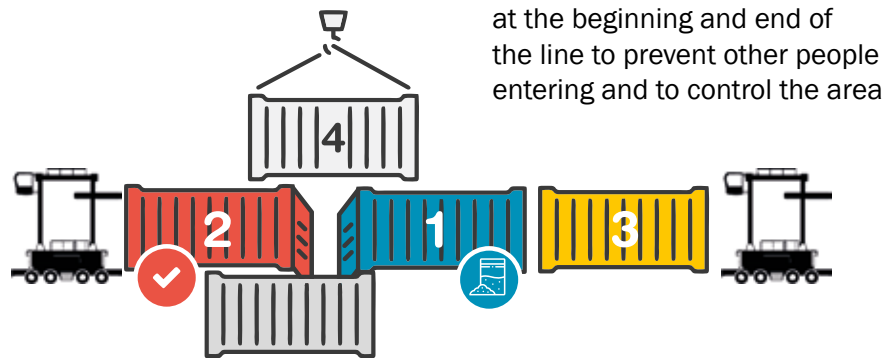
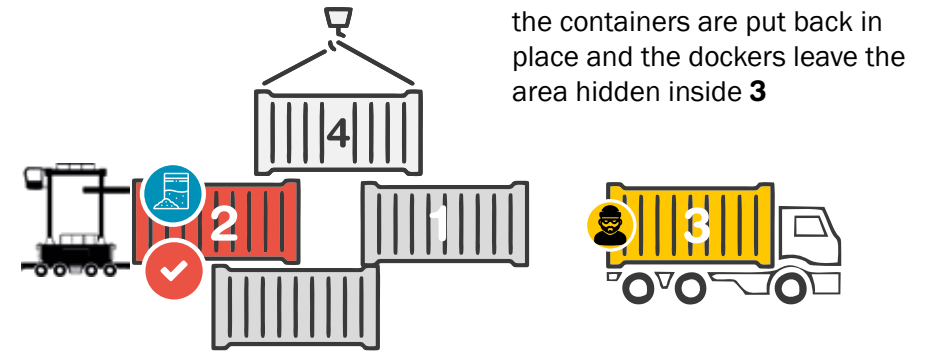
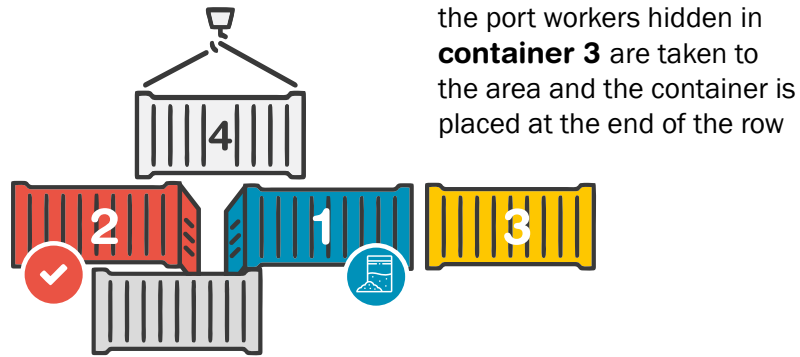
duplicate seal to replace the one removed, identification clothing identical to that used for port work and, in the case of large quantities, a vehicle authorized for access that can move in the port without being subject to inspection. In addition, this type of recovery presupposes the use of port facilities by group members who exploit the legal economy's infrastructure and instrumentation for their own purposes.

Is this an unchangeable system? Not at all. Just as the "Tre-Croci" investigation shows, traffickers have tried to refine the technique

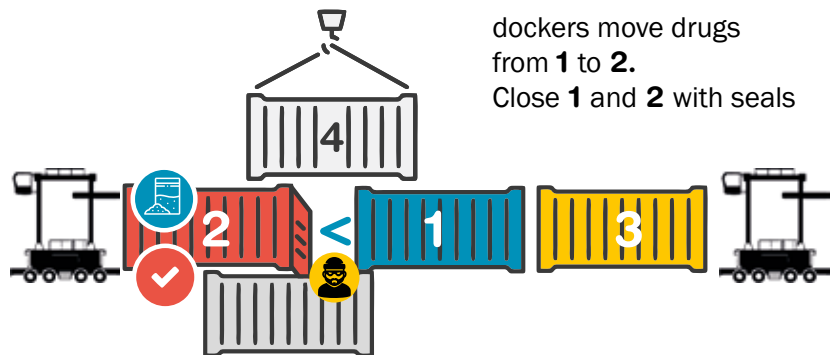
to make the authorities' controls ineffective. The DCSA (2023) argues that this is an evolution of the rip-on/rip-off technique with the use of a "Trojan horse". **It must involve at least 5 people and the handling of 4 containers:** "A first container, where the illicit drug shipment was concealed, is indicated by the criminal organization "sender" of the cocaine, in transshipment at the pre-established port. A second container, called "exit," identified by the importing criminal organization, already subjected to regular customs controls, is already "available" in the port square. A third container, randomly chosen from those on the yard, is empty and functions as a "Trojan horse." It is intended for transport of "team" members in charge of transshipping cocaine consignments. The fourth container, called "brid-

ge," is randomly chosen from those on the dock and is used to remove transshipment operations from view" (DCSA 2023, p. 58). Once a free "corridor" is identified between two rows of containers, in an uncontrolled area of the port, the "sender" and "exit" containers are placed one in front of the other with the doors open. **Above them is another to act as a bridge, and in front, to close the corridor, is the "Trojan horse" inside which the corrupt actors hide.** They can proceed with the transshipment of the drug in peace, then putting the "sender" container, now emptied of the illicit goods, in its place, and the "exit" container in the collection area, ready to be picked up by a complicit transport company, which takes it to its destination.





container 2 is retrieved by a colluding shipping company and taken out of port



4.4 Beyond the port, alternative routes

Illicit maritime traffic has always been subject to continuous evolution, influenced by maritime trade routes, technological innovations related to means of transport and law enforcement authorities' actions. These changes also concern how illicit substances are handled. Although not necessarily always new, particularly articulated or technologically advanced procedures, they certainly adapt to changes that take place in the maritime field. In recent years in Italy, investigating authorities' attention

has increased considerably towards cases of crime in the port sector, especially towards commercial ports of call. Increased repression has led to territorial diversification; that is, the movement of criminal activities from one port to another, and operational diversification through change in traffic methods. In other words, **the more ports were controlled, the more trafficker groups had to find alternative channels to move illicit goods.**

Some investigations that emerged in the news in recent years provide examples.

One of the cases that offers more food for thought is the operation "**Buon vento geno-**

vese,” conducted by the Guardia di Finanza and coordinated by the DDA of Genoa. It identified and arrested a network of traffickers dedicated to the import of over 350 kg of cocaine from Colombia to the Marina di Sestri Ponente of Genoa. This was important investigation because for the first time in the Genoese context, a judge confirmed the aggravating circumstance of the group having operated in drug trafficking with the aim of favouring the ‘Ndrangheta mafia organisation. To manage the import of the drug, there were representatives of the ‘Ndrangheta clan of the Alvaro of Sinopoli (Reggio Calabria). One of these, the boss was the brother of a member of the Alvaro family who had participated a couple of years earlier in the import of cocaine shipments from South America through the port of Genoa, hiding the substance inside the containers. Here it is possible to highlight a sort of leaning process in which the mafia clan is involved in. As a result of repressive activity, **it is able to sharpen its actions and diversifies the transport mode without abandoning the illegal market.**

the more ports were controlled, the more trafficker groups had to find alternative channels to move illicit goods.

Although the operation was conducted with the involvement of infiltrated agents, it is reasonable to assume that the police operator’s contribution did not radically change the transport means identified by the organisation. Alvaro, who decided to negotiate

The idea was for a complicit sailor to throw the drug, divided into bricks and contained within six duffel bags, into the waters in front of the port of Livorno, tying it to a pallet or floating jerrycans, and then retrieving it with a rubber raft, a fishing vessel or a small boat.

directly with the Colombian narcos, found **the availability of a sailboat and a skipper** to cross the Atlantic ocean at a cost of about one million euros. Part was seemingly paid as an advance and the rest at the time of delivery to the port to bribe the dockers (although, for the occasion, they were Guardia di Finanza members).

Another investigation, concluded in 2021 by the Anti-Mafia District Directorate of Florence, revealed another technique traffickers used to circumvent controls on goods passing through commercial ports, and in particular that of Livorno. The name is **“Molo 13”** and featured an affiliate of the ‘Ndrangheta Gallace gang, a colleague, a Colombian drug trafficker and the owner of a boat rental company based in La Spezia. According to the mobster’s plans, the approximately 200 kg of cocaine loaded on a container ship flying the Cypriot flag and leaving from Colombia would reach Spain, in particular the port of Barcelona, and there the drug would be recovered by some dockers. However, problems arose when the ship’s trade route changed, between April and May 2017; instead of Barcelo-

na, the destination became Algeciras. The mobster, along with a partner, was looking for alternative solutions. The idea was for a complicit sailor to throw the drug, divided into bricks and contained within six duffel bags, into the waters in front of the port of Livorno, tying it to a pallet or floating tanks, and then retrieving it with a rubber raft, a fishing vessel or a small boat. The owner of the La Spezia **boat rental company was recruited in the operation**, to provide a 12-meter sailing boat, usually used for tourist purposes. At that time, a small crew was formed, including skippers, to depart from the port of call in the direction of Livorno to be near the local port, at the coordinates agreed with the sailor, around the time scheduled for the drug recovery. Adverse weather conditions or currents cau-

sed the plan to fail. The traffickers were not able to retrieve the drug, which instead was found in the following days on the rocks of the Livorno seafront.

These cases show a particular ability by traffickers (and in particular by the groups in which ‘Ndrangheta mafias are involved) **to adapt to changes affecting the maritime environment.** To respond to unforeseen events, to reduce the chances of being intercepted or only for strategic choices, sometimes criminal organizations try to circumvent the port space by preferring other entry channels for the drug. This use of alternative routes further indicates **the central role of prevention and control measures in the port sector.**

5

GIOIA TAURO,
'NDRANGHETA'S "HOME ADVANTAGE"

Michele Albanese

GIOIA TAURO – “Reggio Calabria, 16 July 1970”: the current mayor Pietro Battaglia convened a popular assembly in Piazza Italia. That day began “Moti di Reggio.” First, it was a popular reaction against the capital in Catanzaro and then the occupation and the direction of the right. It unleashed a rebellion with clashes, barricades, Molotov cocktails, fires, tanks, deaths and injuries and many arrests. In some circles, it was called a rehearsal of what was to happen in Italy with the “Borghese Coup” that took place on 8 December of that year and was then aborted. Borghese, with Chiaie and Concutelli, had met the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta leaders in Aspromonte the previous year, making an iron-clad pact. The Government, led by the Christian Democrat Emilio Colombo, responded to the Piazza assembly, launching a massive investment package in the Calabria region, benefitting the university in Cosenza, the capital in Catanzaro, the V° Centro Siderurgico in Gioia Tauro and the chemical industry in Reggio Calabria. Thousands of billions of old Liras tempted the ‘Ndrangheta so much that it turned from agro-pastoral crime to an en-

trepreneurial mafia. With kidnappings, they collected money to buy trucks and bulldozers, cement plants and iron supplies. **The first stone of the V° Centro building was laid on 25 April 1975 by Giulio Andreotti, who, at the Euromotel, before going to the construction site, had a coffee served to him by one of the bosses of Gioia Tauro.** The true story of Gioia Tauro harbour began that day. Bulldozers devoured 708 hectares of citrus and olive groves that employed about 20,000 people, razed the entire town of Eranova, and the dredgers dug away the port canal’s fertile soil. **Bulldozers, cement and iron, of course, were provided by the new “Ndrangheta services Ltd” to mega construction giants that had won the contracts.** The port, the Ionian-Tyrrhenian highway and the Dam on the Metramo River were built from the old Centro Siderurgico. The colossal pool was completed in the mid-1980s and after countless additional appraisals, cost almost a thousand billion old Liras. But it remained for years a large pool where mussels and other crustaceans proliferated. Then someone came up with the idea of making that port the base for



a 2800 Mgw mega coal-fired power plant for Enel. Strong opposition by the local populations and the mayors of the Piana led the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Palmi, then headed by Agostino Cordova, to seize the construction sites that had been infiltrated by the ‘Ndrangheta. It remained an excellent port for occasional fishermen. Then, an entrepreneur of Genoese origin, Angelo Ravano, who had founded the London-based Contship Italia, sensed, while flying over Calabria, that a large container transshipment hub could be born there, as Gioia Tauro was located on the mainland and along the Suez-Gibraltar axis. This would be an ideal place to strengthen the Mediterranean logistics assets. He requested and obtained from the Government, (Ciampi was the President) a memorandum of understanding (1993) to develop the port. The work started immediately; quays and yards were equipped with cranes and self-propelled trolleys and in October 1995, the first container ship arrived. **Gioia Tauro became a sort of Italian miracle**, climbing the rankings of volumes handled in Europe and the Mediterranean, becoming the shipping market leader in a few years. **This was great opportunity also for the powerful Calabrian crime families who had found an extraordinary landing place also for illegal goods** close to home. They began colossal cocaine trafficking, with the Calabrian

‘Ndrangheta managing over 80% of the cocaine produced in South America. A war was being fought inside the port between financiers, customs officers and traffickers. **Gioia Tauro today is one of the strategic ports for importing cocaine into Europe.** The numbers of seizures are huge and give an idea of the enormous profits made by the ‘Ndrangheta. These businesses are allowing it to buy half of Europe. In April 2023, the Guardia di Finanza and Customs announced that in the previous two years **38 tons of cocaine had been seized in Gioia Tauro alone, accounting for 93.7% of seizures throughout Italy.** It was reported that the percentage of seizures increased from an average of 8-10% to 20-22%. This means that if 38 tons have been seized in two years, more than 150 tons would have passed, destined throughout Europe and not only in our country. The value of more than 150 tons of coca on the marketplaces, which once cut are worth 600 tonnes, create the huge profits that are the basis of the business. It receives billions and billions of euros, many more than a State financial institution, injecting the legal market with illegal economic flows, conditioning the systems of economic and social relations of our country and beyond.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

As explained in the introduction, the report aims to provide an up-to-date analysis of criminal phenomena in Italian ports, with a specific focus on mafia organisations.

Given the limited availability of data in this regard, we decided to conduct extensive empirical research that, although not exhaustive, could offer a more complete picture of a plurality of phenomena. To do this, different methods were adopted involving analysis of open sources.

In the first chapter, the reports of several public institutions were analysed which, by particular skills, devoted space to criminal infiltrations in ports. The first paragraph analyses the perspective of the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission, for which previous research is expanded and updated (Antonelli 2021). In the following paragraphs, the annual and semi-annual reports of the National Anti-Mafia Directorate, the Anti-Mafia Investigation Directorate and the Central Directorate of Anti-Drug Services are examined. These documents' purposes are obviously different from those of scientific analysis; therefore, some limits must be considered. They represent the institutional point of view on the subject, aim to give particular emphasis to the actions conducted by the entity (not specifying the data collection methods) and, almost entirely, omit a specific section on criminal reach into ports. Despite these limitations, it is one of the best resources available as it

is produced by individuals who have particular expertise in the field.

In the second chapter, to systematically map as many crime events as possible that occurred in the port in 2022, a cross-analysis of a plurality of data from three matrices was conducted: a) the archive of press releases produced by the Agency of Monopolies and Customs; b) the archive of press releases produced by the Guardia di Finanza; c) the archive containing the press review produced by Assoport. All the documents produced from 01/01/2022 to 31/12/2022 were manually analysed to identify the events that occurred in the port area. Once selected, the information contained in the documents was catalogued within a dataset divided into 6 macro-sections (event references; geographical references; criminal projection references; criminal activity references; actors involved references; other) for a total of 25 variables. The dataset was constructed in several phases: 1) Processing and identification of variables; 2) data collection and entry; 3) revision.

Phase 1. The dataset consists of 6 sections concerning information relating to the coding of the event (unique code; year; date; source; page); geographical references (region; port; import/export/transit trade; country and port of import; country and port of export); references to the type of criminal prominence (group name; con-

sortium name; territorial origin); references to criminal activities (legal business; illegal business; quantity and type of seized goods; vessel type; place of concealment); references to criminal actors (number and type of public and private actors involved); summaries and references (emergence mode; summary; notes).

Phase 2. The data collection and cataloguing phase was conducted manually, drawing on sources freely accessible online from the institutions' institutional sites. A crime event is understood to be all the episodes that have emerged publicly that concern a crime report, initiation of investigations, investigation or seizure activity that has a sufficient number of variables to be uniquely catalogued. Only and exclusively those events that occurred within the port have been considered, and not other phenomena that affect the maritime sphere. For example, the following have not been included: cases of human trafficking if the port is not a destination but is indicated by the authorities, arms trafficking if related to lawful trade, cases of non-compliance with regulations on navigation or workplace safety, fishing, seizures of boats as a war sanction, and fraud in retroport activities.

Phase 3. The strings collected were uniform and, if related to the same event, unified. Given the sources' particular nature, it was not possible for all events to enter information for all variables. This depends on the type of source used, which has different purposes than those of the analysis. This search returned 140 crime events. The dataset, although it does not fully reflect the plurality and variety of criminal manifestations, currently represents the first attempt to depict the phenomenon.

Of course, all the sources examined present some critical issues that need to be addressed. The first, common to all, concerns the different purposes for which they were produced with respect to the analysis conducted here. The Customs Agency and the Guardia di Finanza press releases are produced to account for the repressive activity of their territorial articulations. They therefore tend to emphasize the operational mechanisms and the protection campaigns promoted with respect to the criminal dynamics of each event. The second critical issue concerns the fact that, although the Customs Agency and the Guardia di Finanza have a particular competence in the port sector, they are not the only law enforcement agencies that can operate in that space, so they refer exclusively to their own activities. Thirdly, with regard to the press review produced by Assoport, it contains only the criminal events that have been the subject of public publication in print or digital media, the criteria for which are not specified.

The results must therefore be interpreted in the light of some assumptions:

- 1) they can map the police force's activism or ability to intervene in the port context;
- 2) a high number of criminal events in a port does not necessarily correspond to greater criminal activity, but certainly a high exposure of the port to criminal interests;
- 3) data on criminal events must be analysed in light of the legal economy's operation mechanisms: type, breadth and core business of a port contribute to determining the conditions for the performance of certain illicit phenomena.

Ultimately, aside from these critical issues,

the data contained in the dataset are to be understood as underestimated with respect to the actual number of criminal events in ports.

Not all criminal events that have been catalogued and have therefore found some form of public emergence are followed by sanction, trials or convictions. For this report's purposes, the elements collected represent obvious warning signs regarding the port's attractiveness for criminal interests. Here, reference is made to projections and not criminal presences, especially regarding illicit trafficking.

The third chapter's analysis mode and empirical basis are still different. The data that emerge reflect the particular nature of the source (DNA and DIA), which tell a point of view on the subject, very often focused on intelligence operations and information. Two data matrices were examined: 1) DNA's annual reports, published between 2006 and 2018 and referring to the previous year; 2) DIA's half-yearly reports, published between the first half of 2018 and the second half of 2022.

The methodological choice was necessary due to the inability to access subsequent

DNA reports, since they were not published. Although the sources are uneven, there are no negative consequences for the chapter's objectives. The intent is to analyse the phenomenon's emergence, of which at most it is possible to find a downward estimate. Within the documents examined, all the references were collected in which the words "port(s)" and "harbour(s)" appear and which in some way have to do with reports about the criminal projection in the ports of call. Some references are more complete and refer to police operations or judicial investigations; others are limited to reporting interests, sometimes specifying in which type of market (legal or illegal). All references have been catalogued within a dataset. Given the source's particular nature, the analysis does not consider the criminal projections that have emerged annually, subject to factors that would make the data extremely variable, but tries to analyse them in a systemic vision that develops over time.

The materials collected in the first part of the research then guided the selection of the case studies presented in the fourth chapter and their analysis.

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Adnkronos | Agi | Altreconomia | Ancona Today | Ansa | Askanews | Avvenire | Città della Spezia | Corriere della Calabria | Corriere della Sera | Corriere Marittimo | Dire | Domani | Genova Today | Il Fatto Quotidiano | Il Giornale | Il Mattino | Il Messaggero | Il Nautilus | Il Resto del Carlino | Il Piccolo | Il Post | Il Sole 24 Ore | Informazioni Marittime | Internazionale | Italia Oggi | Italtpress | La Gazzetta Marittima | La Nazione | la Repubblica | La Stampa | Lavalibera | L'Espresso | Messaggero Marittimo | Port News | Quotidiano del Sud | Rainews | Ravennanotizie.it | Savona News | Ship Mag | The Medi Telegraph | Trapani Oggi | Wired



LIBERA was born in 1995 to meet a need for justice and quench or at least mitigate a thirst for Truth. It was born to build paths of hope and change. Those whose lives were broken by mafia violence would no longer be abandoned. It was born to support all those engaged in combatting organised crime and the corruption that makes it possible.

Libera is a story of meeting, a narration of exchange. Libera is a network of national and local associations, movements and groups, cooperatives, schools, dioceses, parishes and scout groups involved in a commitment. It stands not only “against” mafia groups, corruption, crime and those who feed them, but strongly “for” social justice, the search for truth, protection of rights, transparent politics, a democratic legality based on equality, a living and shared memory and an active citizenship that lives up to the spirit and hopes of the constitution.

Libera is present throughout Italy in 20 regional groups, 83 provincial groups and 296 local groups. The Libera Internazionale network comprises 80 international organisations in 35 countries in Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Every summer, more than 4,000 young people participate in commitment and training camps on confiscated assets. About a thousand of them animate environmental protection projects in collaboration with the Carabinieri's Forest Rangers Corps. More than 5,000 schools and university faculties are engaged with Libera in the construction and implementation of training and education courses on accountability and democratic legality. These involve thousands of students and hundreds of teachers and university professors.

Libera is a shared and responsible archive, thanks to the families of the mafia's innocent victims, who strive to keep the ideals and dreams of their loved ones alive.

Libera promotes three international networks: ALAS America Latina Alternativa Social, which consists of over 60 operating entities in 12 Latin-American countries, CHANCE Civil Hub Against Organised Crime in Europe, 33 entities in 17 countries, and PLACE Peace and Liberation in Africa through Change and Engagement in sub-Saharan Africa, 42 associations in 16 countries. Libera coordinates this network, with onus on the equal exchange between parties and the key role of partner organisations, whose careful overview of the territories is the “conditio sine qua non” to project and promote significant actions and proposals for change.

Libera creates projects and paths toward social justice and the dignity of persons with the conviction that a shared commitment is required to achieve them.

Libera has always been a means, not a goal. The purpose is a daily commitment to free the country from mafia groups, corruption and illegality.

In a word: freedom



Libera

Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie

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