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Current Routes, Institutional Responses and Human Smuggling across the Mediterranean Sea



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20/02/2017

MPC - www.migrationpolicycentre.eu



EUI



TRAFFICKING / SMUGGLING

(UN 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime)

Smuggling

“Smuggling of migrants” is the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident

Trafficking

“Trafficking in persons” is the recruitment, transportation, and harbouring of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion for the purpose of exploitation.



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TRAFFICKING & SMUGGLING

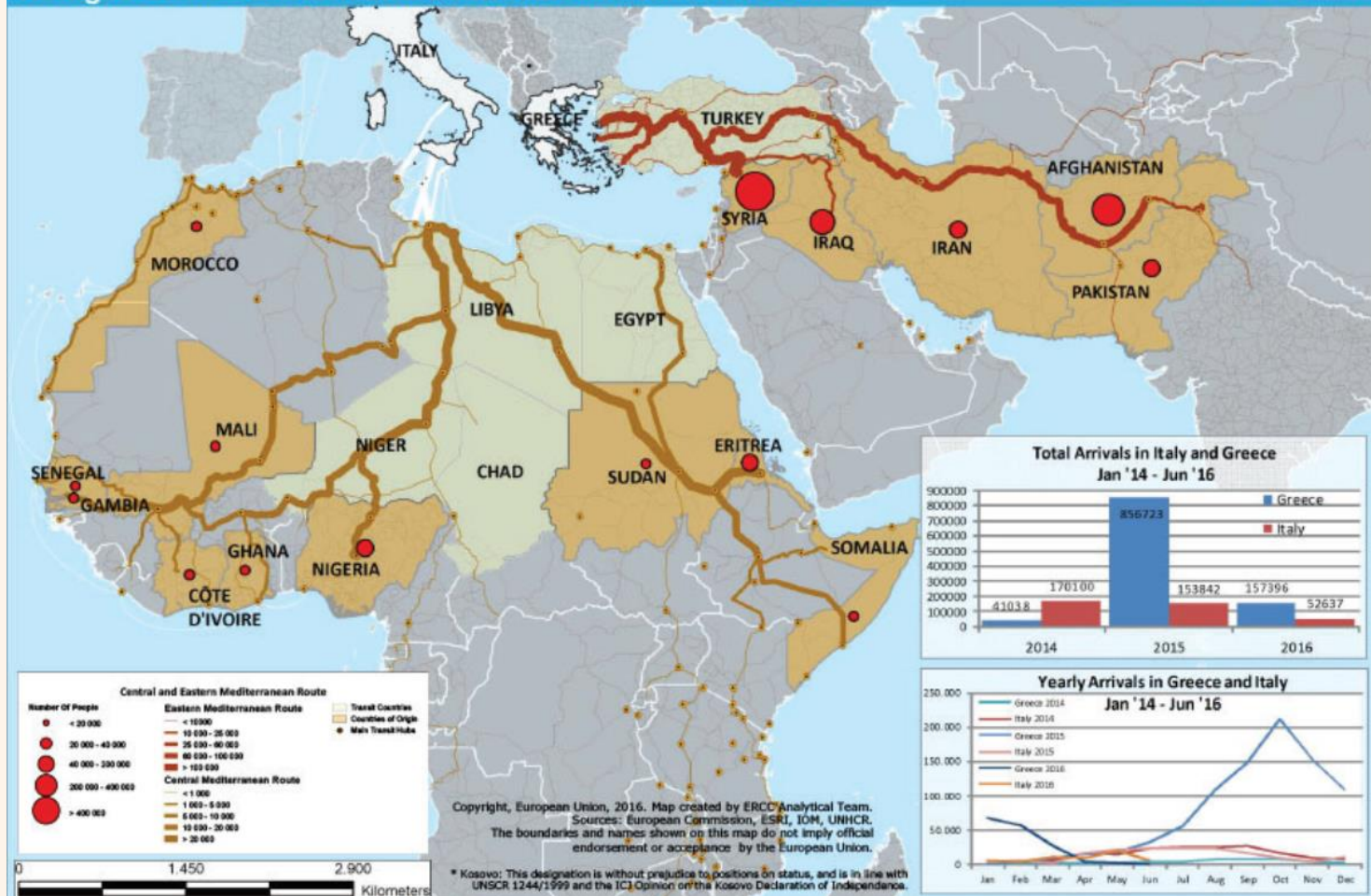
(UN 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime)

Despite the Trafficking and Smuggling Protocols are intended to distinguish smuggling from trafficking, this distinction has de facto been collapsed.

- By making the consent of the migrant in her/his movement across borders ‘irrelevant’ if they experience any form of coercion, this definition also dramatically expands the scope of trafficking”.
- “Coercion”, within the definition, is not only understood in the terms of brute physical force or mental domination, but also in more general terms as “the abuse of a position of vulnerability.



Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) | ECHO Daily Map | 15/06/2016
Refugee Crisis - Eastern and Central Mediterranean Routes

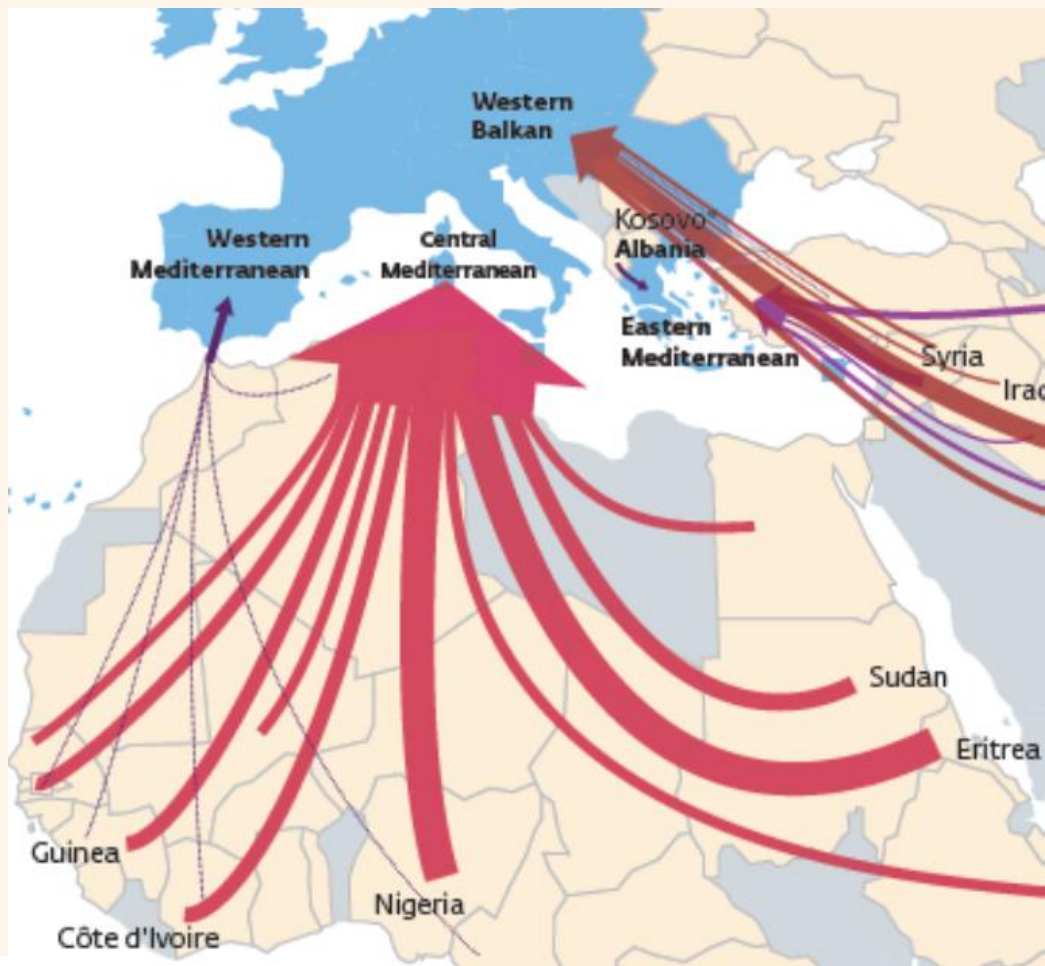


The “Balkan Route”





The “Central Route”





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Turkey's new era
An Ottoman legacy still shaping the modern world

19.06.2015

Newsweek



MASTERMIND

The evil genius
behind
the
migrant
crisis



Area of operation: Eastern Med Route

- Turkey
- Fiberglass boats, rubber dinghies, fishing boats, big cargo ships
- 1000/1500 EUR
- 1h minimum with a rubber dinghy

Area of operation: Central Med Route

- Libya
- Fiberglass boats, rubber dinghies, fishing boats
- From 800 EUR to 10.000 EUR
- Several days, also weeks (sea crossing)



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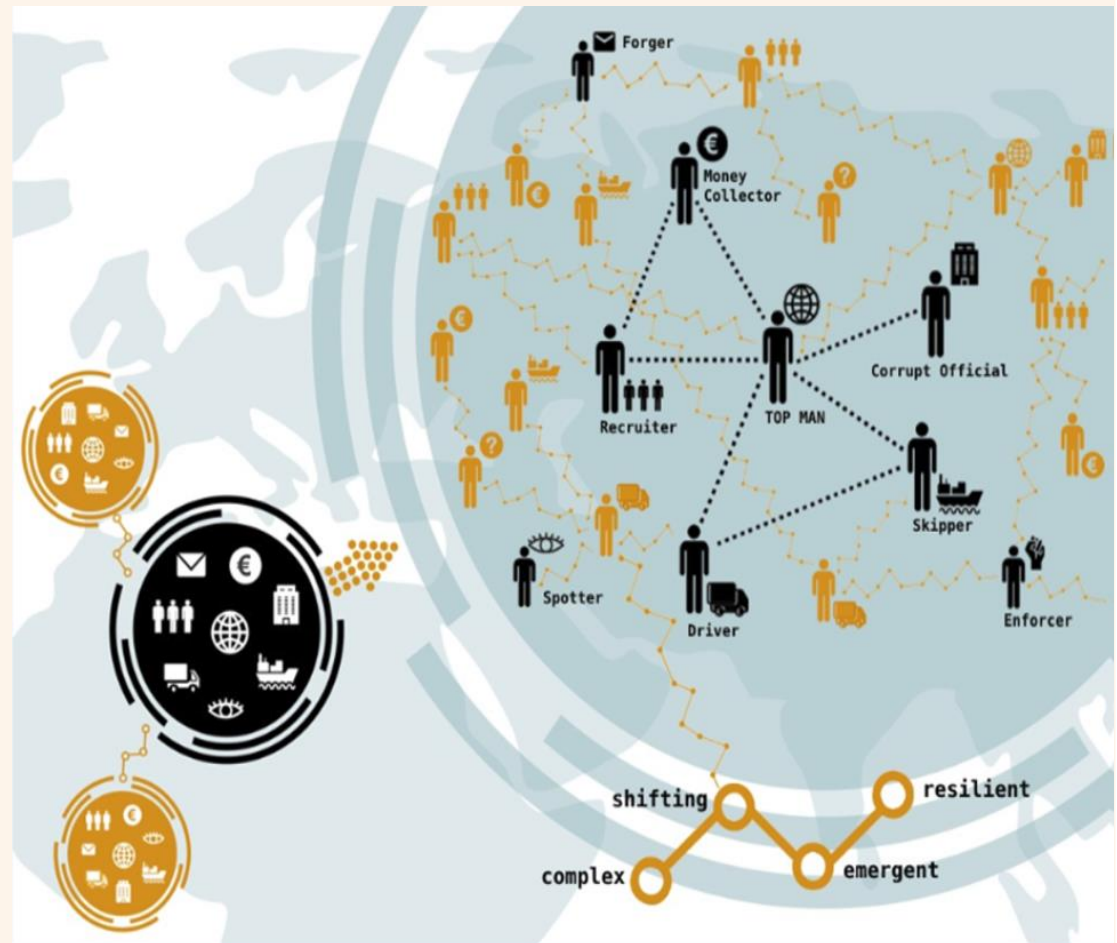
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Single-service
providers

Multi-service
networks

Organigram

- Snake-heads/top men
- Recruiters
- Guides, drivers or skippers
- Money collectors (Hawala shop/Western Union)
- Forgers (passports/formal documents)
- Suppliers (boat makers, boat owners, car/bus owners);
- Corrupt government officials (immigration officials) and corrupt service providers (train conductors etc)
- Enforcers
- Receivers (NGOs?)





Structure

- A system of flexible and independent groups in partnership with one another for short periods
- Highly differentiated yet flexible structure
- Roles not integrated into rigid hierarchies and bound by long-term agreements
- Market with high competition and fast changing scenarios → heterogeneity and flexibility of smuggling networks



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The business



Looking for the smuggler: a relationship of thrust

“All you have to do is search Facebook by typing: ‘ways to move to Europe or Germany’ or whatever destination you choose, and you will find plenty of pages that can provide you with a large number of smugglers’ contacts. Personally, I took a smuggler contact number from a friend who had already approached the same smuggler and who had succeeded arriving in Germany.”

“Once you get to Istanbul or Izmir, it is easy to find smugglers to help you reach Greece: they are everywhere in the city”





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Blurring roles

smuggler
migrant



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To sum-up

Empirical evidence show that human smuggling across the Mediterranean sea is

- the sum of highly heterogeneous organizations operating on a small scale and in a short time-frame;
- that these groups are characterized by the lack of solid hierarchies and the existence of interchangeable figures;
- that they provide a service that is in great demand without necessarily exploiting their clients;
- and that the smuggler and the costumer may, at times, be the same person.



A security-based policy

- **Expensive:** the large patrolled area hindered the extent of these operations and prompted spiralling financial costs
- **Dangerous:** the tightening of border control generally exposes migrants to greater dangers
- **Counterproductive:** growing tendency of these groups to specialise and to increase their capacity of delivering specialized services to would-be migrants in a systematic and standardized manner.



Short-term measures

- SAR operations

Medium-term measures

- Agreement with 3rd countries on the better enforcement of exit controls
- More functional hotspots in Italy

Long-term measures

- Investing in economic growth and job creation in sending countries.
- Opening legal avenues to Europe