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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](http://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 coercion for the purpose of exploitation.



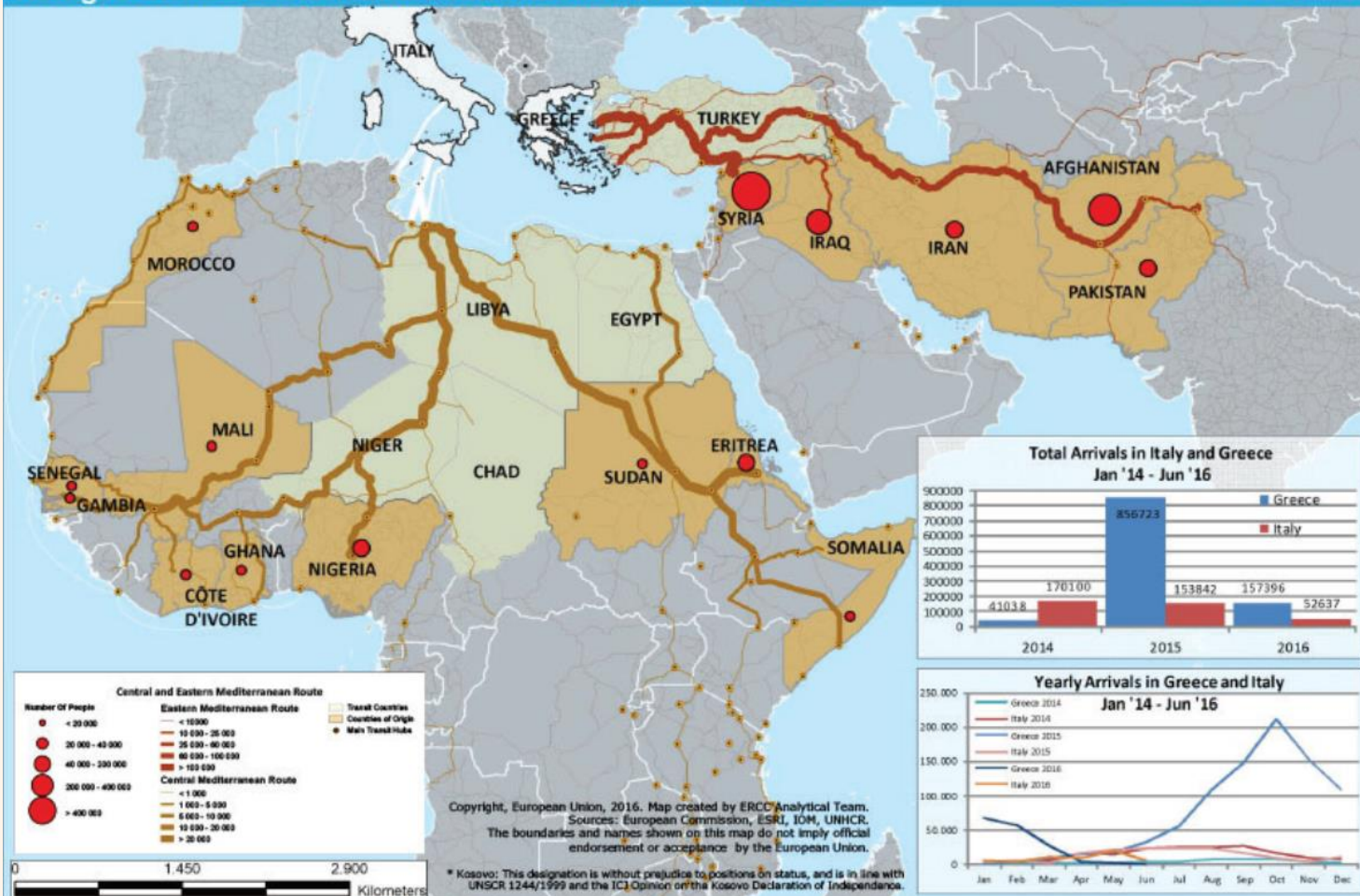
# ***TRAFFICKING & SMUGGLING***

(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

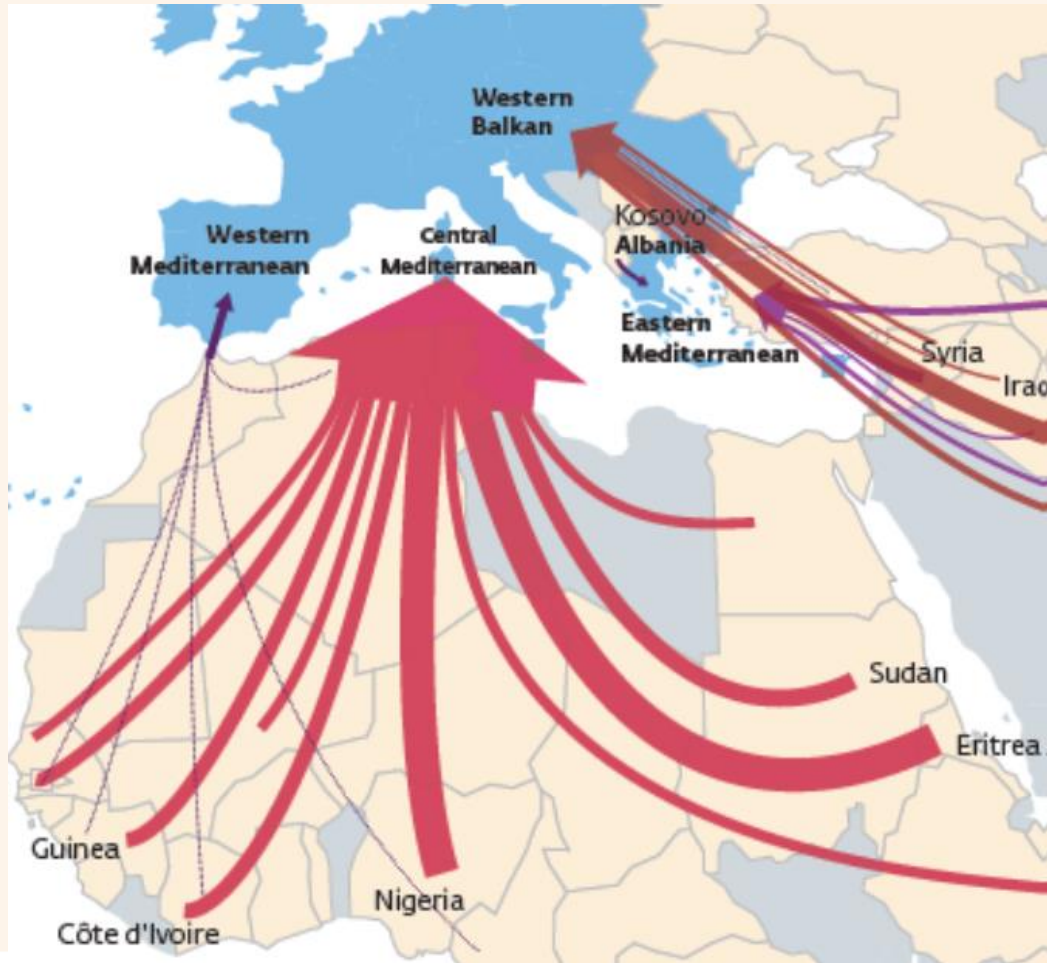


# The “Balkan Route”





# 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)

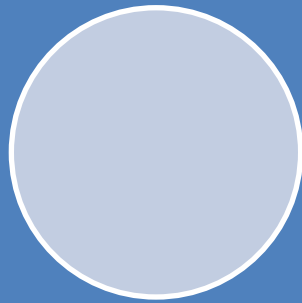


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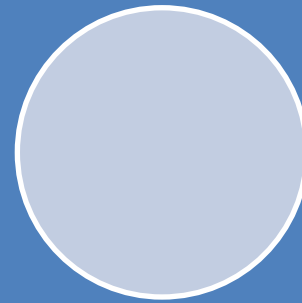
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Single-service  
providers

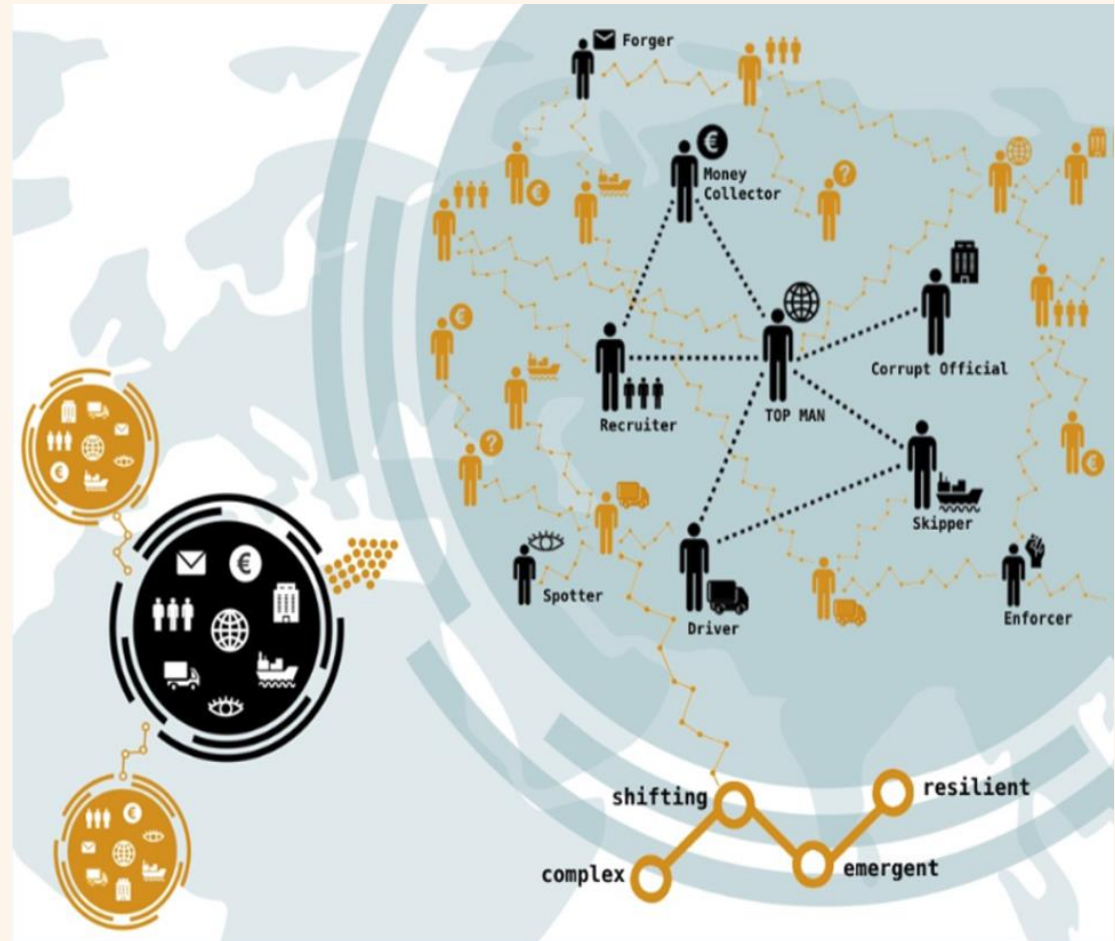


Multi-service  
networks



# 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



# 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



## 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