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Information sharing under the Protocol: Lessons from other contraband markets

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What this presentation covers

- Information sharing requirements under the Protocol
- Three examples of information sharing for other forms of contraband:
 1. General discussion: the EU Trade in Wildlife Information Exchange (EU-TWIX)
 2. Seizure data: the UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform (DMP)
 3. Profiling: the UNODC Passenger and Cargo Border Team (PCBT)
- How UNODC could help facilitate information exchange under the Protocol



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Articles 20 and 21: General and enforcement information sharing

- Article 20 (1) says Parties shall share information on aggregated seizures, trade data, production data, trends, concealment methods, modi operandi, and any other information as agreed.

(a) in aggregate form, details of seizures of tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment, quantity, value of seizures, product descriptions, dates and places of manufacture; and taxes evaded;

- Article 21 (1) refers to bilateral nominal information exchanged between enforcement authorities for operational purposes, including individual seizures (1e).
- Article 20 (2) says Parties shall cooperate with each other and with competent international organizations to build the capacity of Parties to collect and exchange information.



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EU-TWIX Mailing List

- Founded in 2005 and hosted for EU enforcement agencies by an NGO (TRAFFIC)
- Connects officials from countries via their email address
- Access-restricted, only enforcement
- Quick sharing of seizures news/alerts
- No nominal information shared
- Help with identification of seized products, price questions, legal questions, and more.
- EU-TWIX also includes seizure sharing



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Example: Brief on European eel enforcement

5) Border points (Customs):

Smuggling methods and routes:

Checked-in luggage: the *modus operandi* is the same as in previous years: suitcases with thermal isolation (see pictures) and ice in a frozen plastic bottles. More recently, glass eels have also been found hidden in Styrofoam ice chests packed in checked-in luggage.

Customs staff should base their risk analysis at the exit border point on the following:

- Scanners must search for “all organic” material and the bottles filled with iced water
- Most often two or three new suitcases of the same type/brand checked-in together usually overnight.
- Mules are travellers of different country origin, used to be [REDACTED] and some [REDACTED] with EU passport, however, also Caucasian Europeans have been detected in the previous season.
- **Origin/Transit points:** any airport in the EU and neighboring countries may be used to exit the border towards Asian countries (final destination, such as [REDACTED], others). Also, as seen in the previous seasons, to a North African country (there is evidence pointing at [REDACTED] might be others), [REDACTED], or the Middle East, bonding to Asia from there.
- The chosen routes seem to follow the “cheapest way out” pattern, not predictable therefore.

Timing:

The risk of glass eel trafficking at EU borders is:

- New moon days plus 6 days: smuggling of freshly caught glass eels is the most used, nevertheless it is now seen almost during the whole season.
- Outside of the fishing season (approx. October – June): smuggling out of glass eels kept in pools

Checked in luggage:



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Example: Information requests



Cacti.pdf
470 KB



Dear colleagues,

The [REDACTED] Customs seized a package from [REDACTED] with specimens that were suspected to be cacti.

Can it be concluded from the pictures that they are cacti and that they do not belong to *Pereskia* spp, *Pereskopsis* spp and *Quiabentia* spp?

Can anyone tell?

Kind regards



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Drugs Monitoring Platform (DMP)

Online geo-coded system with over 656,000 events

- ✓ Visualization and dissemination of seizures
- ✓ Tool for monitoring drug trafficking trends, routes, modus operandi
- ✓ Common system, secure data sharing

Target Audience:

Law Enforcement, Analysts, Member States

Objective:

Assist international community by providing high-quality, essential evidence to inform policy-making and support operational action





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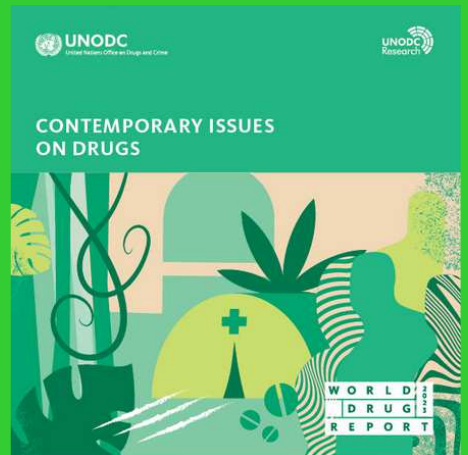
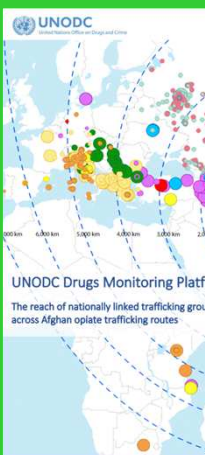
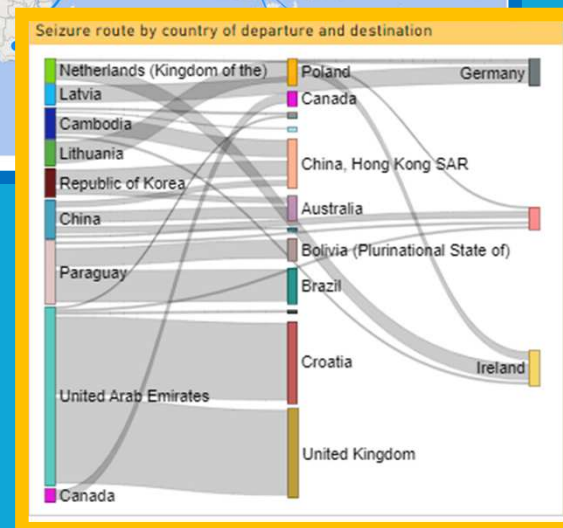
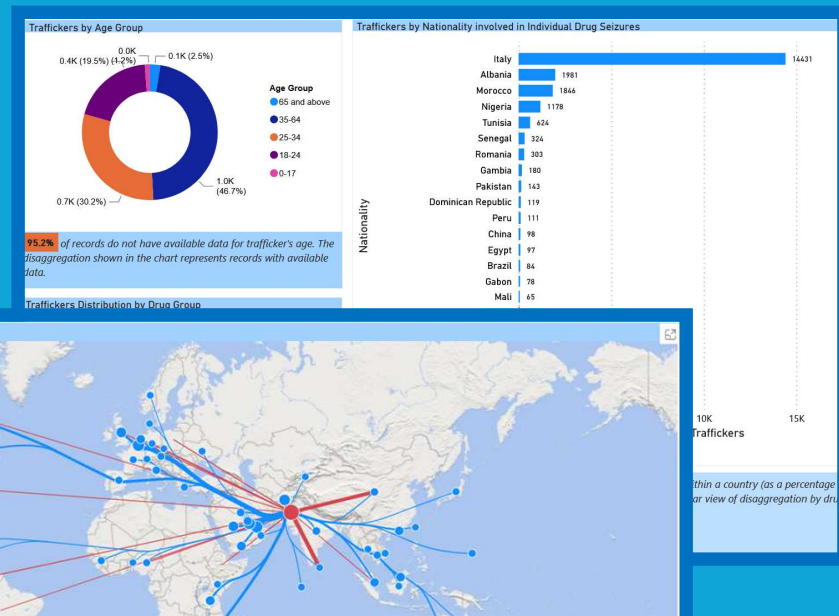
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DMP products: Dashboards and reports

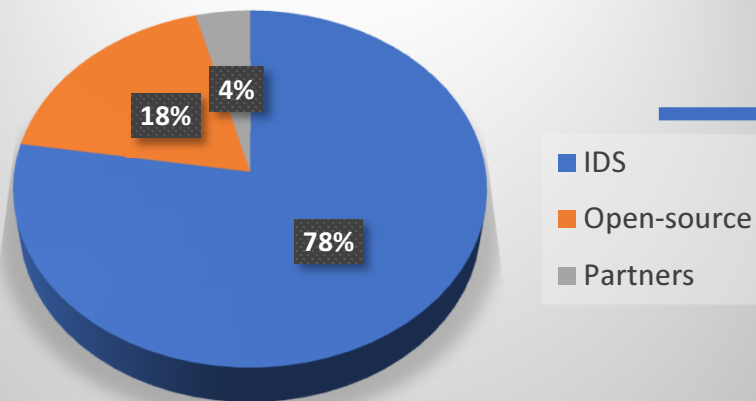
Data Dissemination and enhanced user experience:

- Numerous analytical dashboards (maps, charts, sankeys)
 - ✓ trafficking flows (departure/origin, transit, destination)
 - ✓ trafficker data
 - ✓ country profiles
- Briefs on drug trafficking/tailored analyses
- Not used for aggregate totals



Data sources and advantages of the DMP

Distribution of DMP data by source: 2020-2023



Individual drug seizures (IDS) - main source of data:

each *singular interception* of drugs/substances recorded within the national territory of Member States, taking place at a specific place and point in time of the event.

- It is complemented by open-source and partner data

Advantages of the system:

- ✓ Versatility to monitor and improve understanding of evolving threats/changes in drug markets
- ✓ Real-time data (<6 months old)
 - multi-source dataset
 - living system
- ✓ Universal coverage (global/across drugs)
- ✓ Sub-national/regional picture



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Passenger and Cargo Border Team

- UNODC's PCBT contributes to building the capacity of units comprised of customs, national police, anti-narcotics forces, and other law enforcement agencies.
- These units are located at seaports, airports, dry ports, rail terminals and land border crossings and work to identify and inspect high-risk containers, cargo, mail and passengers.
- These efforts are assisted by enhanced inter-agency cooperation nationally and regionally – all with minimum disruption to legitimate trade and the movement of passengers.



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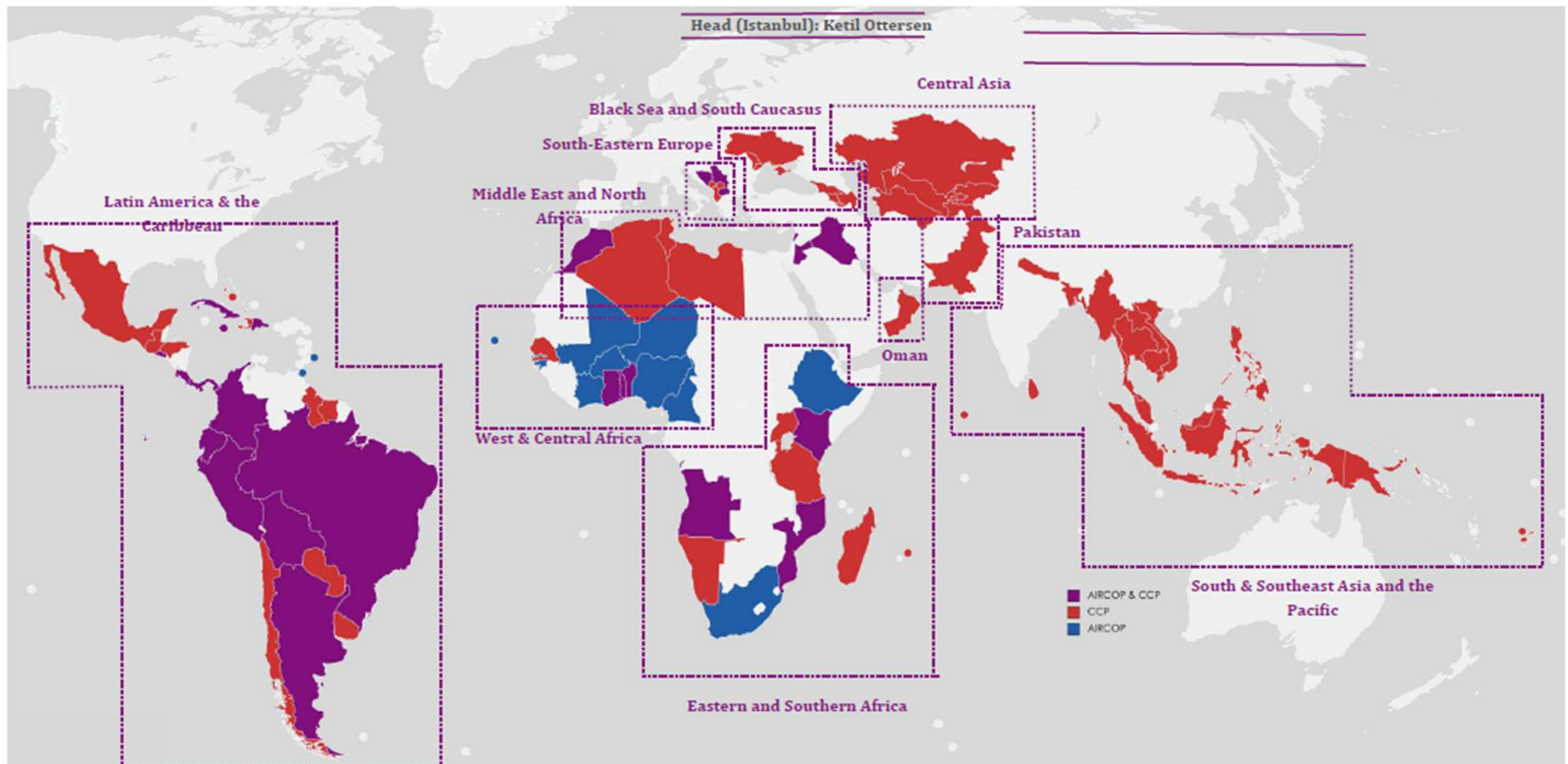
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Passenger and Cargo Border Team

WHERE WE ARE

86 countries of implementation | **179** units & task forces | **10** regions of implementation

81 Units at the seaports
67 Units at the airports
31 Units at the land borders





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May 2022: 30 tons of shisha tobacco, PCU Osh, Kyrgyzstan



January 2023: 17,320,000 pcs. of cigarettes by PCU Aktau Seaport, Kazakhstan



July 2022: 40 tons of cigarettes by ACCU Almaty, Kazakhstan

Risk indicators:

- a) ACCU member from Civil Aviation noticed break in the original packaging
- b) cargo was declared as 'toilet paper' costed at USD 45,600
- c) arrived by a charter flight from UAE to Kazakhstan, costing over \$1,000,000



March 2023: 2,300,000 pcs. of cigarettes by ACCU Tashkent, Uzbekistan



May 2023: 16,060,000 pcs. of cigarettes by PCU Osh, Kyrgyzstan based on alert message from Turkmenistan



July 2022: 16 tons of cigarettes by Tajik Customs based on alert message from ACCU Tashkent, Uzbekistan



June 2023: 11,870,000 pcs. of cigarettes by PCU Alat, Uzbekistan





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Cooperating with competent IGOs to share information - Article 20 (2)

- Pilot seizures database – discussed in another side event
- Could integrate findings into CCP/Aircop profiling
- Could incorporate individual seizure data given by Parties
- Could incorporate a global brands database, making use of licensing information
- Could include a listserv for information exchange
- Could include pricing information for market monitoring



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Open-source tobacco seizures: 10/22-10/23



Source: UNODC Pilot Seizure Database