



International Expert Round/Conference
The Impact of Organized Crime on Democratic Governance
Brussels, September 30th, 2009

Background:

Organized crime is a growing problem worldwide. In traditional concepts of security thinking, Europe as well as Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are one of the most peaceful regions in the world, since interstate war has not been a serious concern for the last decades. Nevertheless new forms of violence, like interstate conflicts and organized crime are undermining the states capacity to govern and fulfill the basic principles of modern statehood: the control of territory, the security of its citizens, a judicial system and the freedom of expression. Few of these basic indicators for democratic governance are true for several LAC countries and some European countries.¹ Institutions of the political system are already undercut by the so called "Narcos" or other non state actors. Fact is that "the illegal activities are carried out by structured groups (...) existing for a prolonged period of time and having the aim of committing serious crimes through concerted action by using intimidation, violence, corruption or other means in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit". The business, as long as it pays, can vary. The involvement of politicians and militaries as well as police forces (those publicly legitimized by the state) undermines the trust of civil society to state institutions and often promotes the request for "zero tolerance" and conservative approaches (Colombia, Mexico, Italy among others). The concept of a "hard hand" as a reaction to organized crime often comes along with human and civil rights abuses.

Organized crime is linked internationally and globally therefore solutions have to be created by the international community, in bilateral and multilateral agreements. Since the goal is material benefit the illegal economy is a radical form of a capitalist approach based on demand and supply. Since an extremely unequal distribution of income and growing unemployment is a consequence of the financial crisis, it is expected that violence will probably deepen and extend in LAC as well as in European countries. Especially violence that is closely associated with gangs and cartels, drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, public insecurity and the use of non-democratic means for expressing social and political discontent will probably grow in the years to come. It is therefore important to deal with the topic of organized crime and its impact on democratic governance to maintain the latter.

Conference/Expert Round:

The goal of the conference is to design tools and a common vision between international stakeholders from Europe and Latin-America that can effectively deal with organized crime and its effects on democratic governance. Guiding questions are: How is organized crime affecting democratic governance? Are there common experiences on negative impacts of organized crime as well as solutions in European and Latin-American countries? Is legalization of illicit drugs an option to reduce the impact of organized crime in both regions? What are already existing tools to handle the problem on a regional and international level? Can regional responsibilities be implemented by regional actors and institutions such as the South American Defense Council/UNASUR or a Common European Security and Defense Policy, ESDP ? Is there a regional and multilateral responsibility to react to the abuses of human rights due to organized crime?

¹ Focusing on the topic of the negative impact of organized crime on governance, currently Mexico is affected by the expansion of drug cartels and trafficking routes in the country. Colombia's internal conflict has since the 1980s been affected by the power of drug cartels and the increasing involvement of non state actors like the FARC and the AUC into the illegal business.

Programme Draft

Round table discussion (25 Participants)

Tuesday, September 29th, 2009

7 p.m. Welcome Dinner hosted by FES Brussels

Wednesday, September 30th, 2009

9.00 a.m. Welcome, **Andrä Gärber**, Director FES Brussels

9.15 a.m. Introduction: The impact of organized crime on democratic governance,
Katharina Hofmann, Latin American Department FES Berlin

9.30-

11.00 a.m. **First Panel: Organized Crime and it's impact on democratic governance in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Moderation: **Hans Mathieu**, Director, FES Colombia, Coordinator, Project on Regional Security

9.30-

9.45 a.m. **The case of Mexico**

Key note speaker: **Raúl Benítez Manaut**, President, Colectivo de Análisis de Seguridad con Democracia (CASEDE), Mexico

9.45-

10.00 a.m. **The case of Colombia**

Key note speaker: **Francisco Thoumi**, Tinker Visiting Professor, Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, Austin

11.00-11:15 Coffee Break

11.15-

13.00 p.m. **Second Panel: Organized Crime and it's impact on democratic governance in Europe**

Moderation: FES Brussels

11.15-

11.30 am **The case of Italy**

Key note speaker: **Pierpaolo Romani**, Avviso Pubblico, Italy (tbc)

11.30-

11.45 am **The case of Bulgaria**

Keynote speaker: **Ruslan Stefanov**, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Bulgaria

13.00-14.30 p.m. Lunch Break

14.30-18.00 p.m. **Third Panel: Organized crime and the development of democratic governance**

Moderation: **Wolf Grabendorff**, Senior Fellow, John Hopkins University

14.30-14.45 p.m. **Democratic control of security forces/-Police- and judicial reforms**
Key note speaker: **Marcelo Sain**, Argentina

14.45-15.00 p.m. **The Role of parties and civil society**
Key note speaker: **Ana Gomes**, Member of the European Parliament (tbc)

16.00 p.m. Coffee Break

16.15 p.m. **Fourth Panel: Regional and Multilateral Responsibilities**

Moderation: **Thomas Manz**, Latin American Department FES Berlin

16.15-16.30 p.m. **The Role of UNASUR**
Key note speaker: **Francine Jácome**, Instituto Venezolano de Estudios Sociales y Políticos (INVESP)

16.30-16.45 p.m. **The Role of the UN**
Key note speaker: **James Cockayne**, International Peace Institute, USA

16.45-17.00 p.m. **The Role of the EU**
Key note speaker: **Morten Knudsen**, General Secretariat, Council of the EU, Belgium (tbc)

18.00 p.m. End of Conference