



# Regional cooperation for combating illicit trade in SEE through SELEC

*International Conference*  
***Illicit Trade of tobacco products along the Balkan Route***

*18 October, 2019*  
*Sofia, Bulgaria*



# Southeast European Law Enforcement Center



- International law enforcement organization
- Cooperation platform for the Police and Customs authorities
- established in 2011
- successor of SECI Center (founded in 1999)



# SELEC MISSION



To provide  
**support**  
for the Member States  
and enhance cooperation in preventing and  
combating trans-border serious and  
organized crime.

# MEMBER STATES



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA



HELLENIC REPUBLIC



HUNGARY



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



MONTENEGRO



REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA



ROMANIA



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY





# SELEC PARTNERS



## Operational Partner Status:

- exchange personal data
- participate in operational activities
- post representative at SELEC HQ

Interpol

Italian Republic

United States of America

# SELEC PARTNERS

## Observer Status:

- receive strategic information
- participate in SELEC's different meetings, trainings and seminars

Austria	Japan
Belgium	The Netherlands
Belarus	Slovak Republic
Czech Republic	Spain
EUBAM	Switzerland
France	Ukraine
GCC-CIC	UK
Georgia	UNMIK
Germany	UNODC
IOM	WCO
Israel	

# OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES

- EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
- REGIONAL OPERATIONS
- JOINT INVESTIGATIONS
- OPERATIONAL MEETINGS
- ANALYTICAL SUPPORT



# SELEC TASK FORCES



Mirage - countering THB and smuggling of migrants

Anti-Drug Trafficking

Financial and Computer Crime

Environment and Nature Related Crimes

Stolen Vehicles

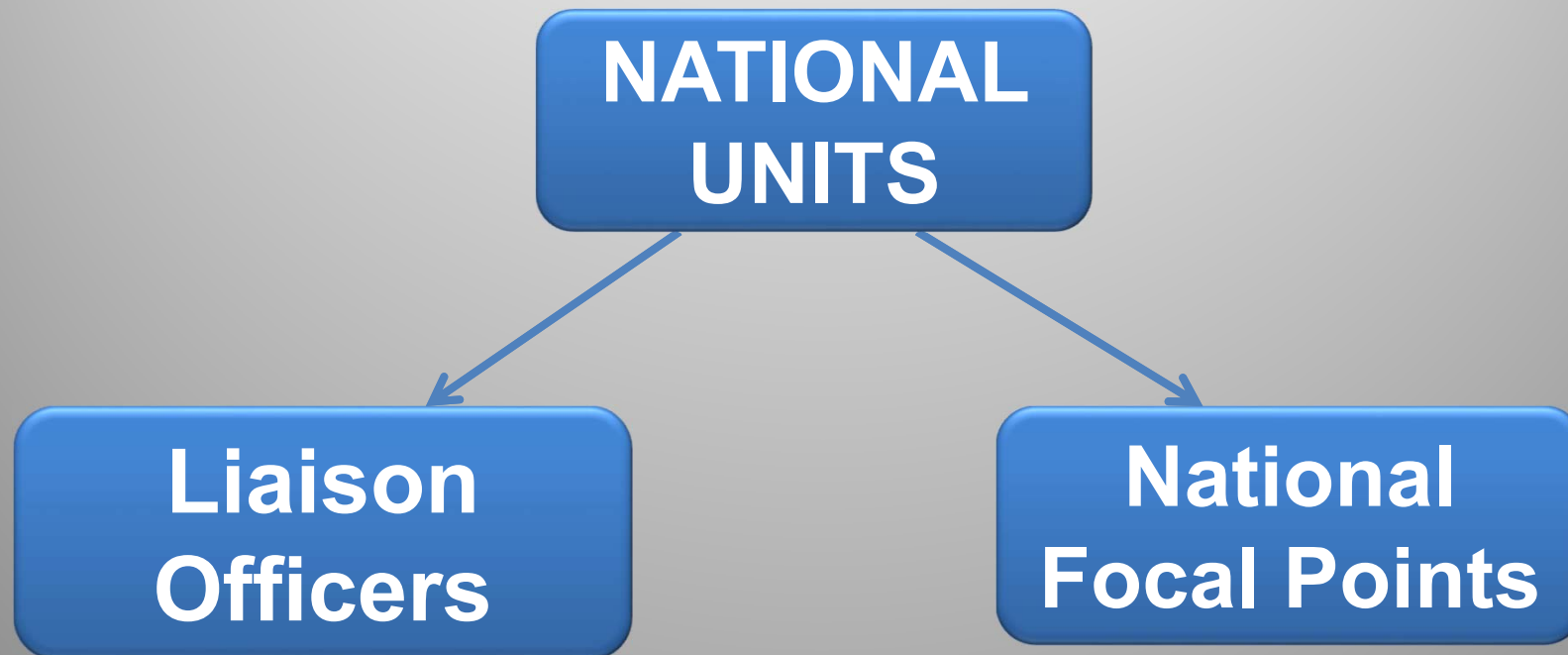
**Anti-Fraud and Anti-Smuggling**

Anti-Terrorism

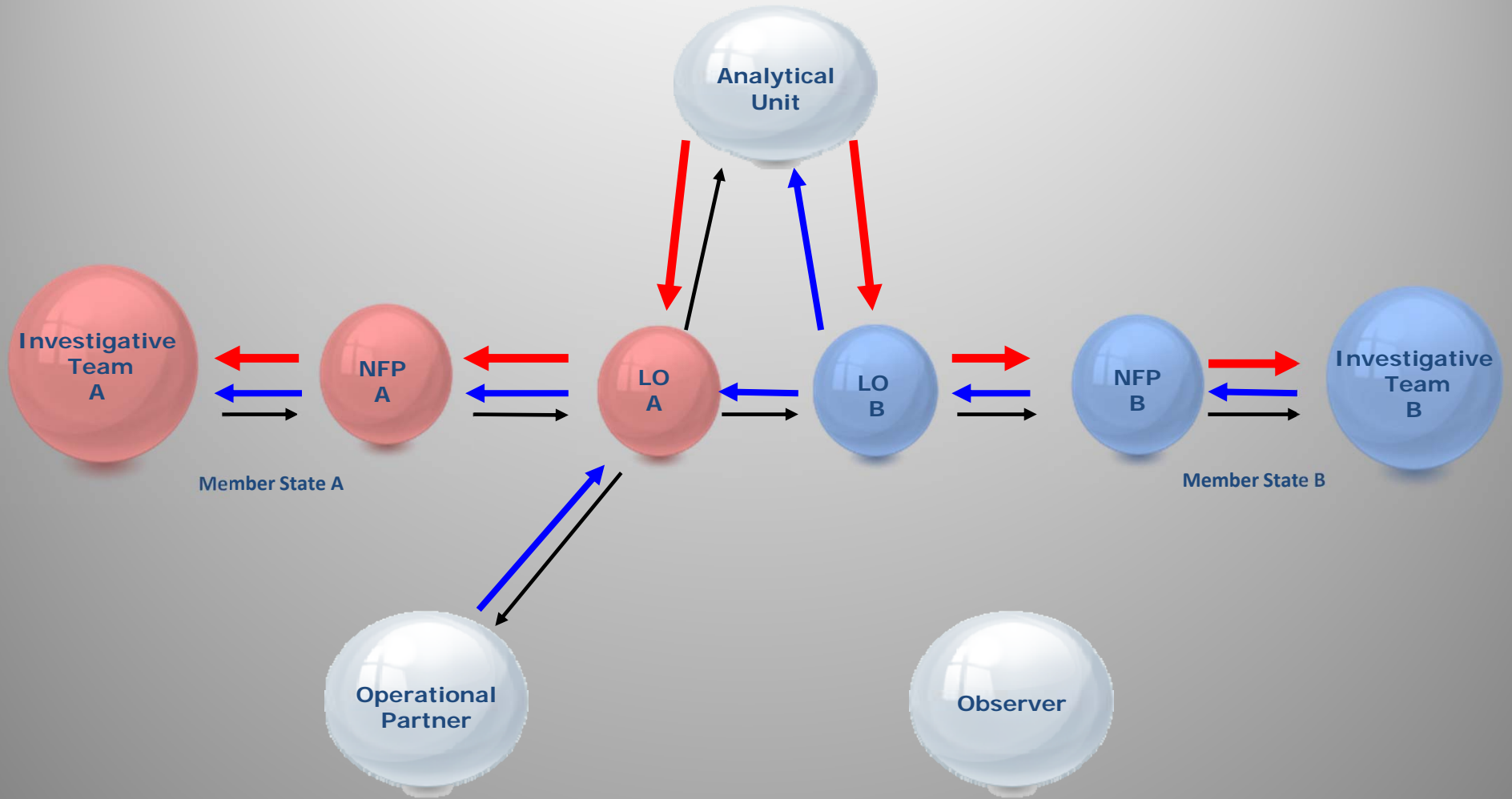
Container Security

# NATIONAL UNITS

The National Units - established by the Member States to implement the SELEC Convention



# INFORMATION FLOW



# INFORMATION EXCHANGE

## *Exchange of information*



# JOINT INVESTIGATIONS





# REGIONAL OPERATIONS



**Operation ECLIPSE III** - combating illegal trade with a focus on smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco related products. Results:

- **41.5 million cigarettes seized**, 557 kg of raw tobacco, 362 kg of water-pipe tobacco and 354 kg of smoking tobacco

**Operation KNOW-HOW III** - targeting detection and confinement of counterfeit goods entering Southeast Europe:

- Estimated value of seized goods - **9,647,000 EUR**

## Operational Focus

Real-time information exchange

Intelligence-led joint investigations

Support for operations

- **EU and non-EU countries**
- **Posted LO/Network of NFPs**
- **Secure communication network**
- **Analytical capabilities**
- **Training facilities**
- **Operational Centre Unit (in 2019)**
- **Prosecutors involved (SEEPAG)**



# 2019 Report on the situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling in Southeast Europe



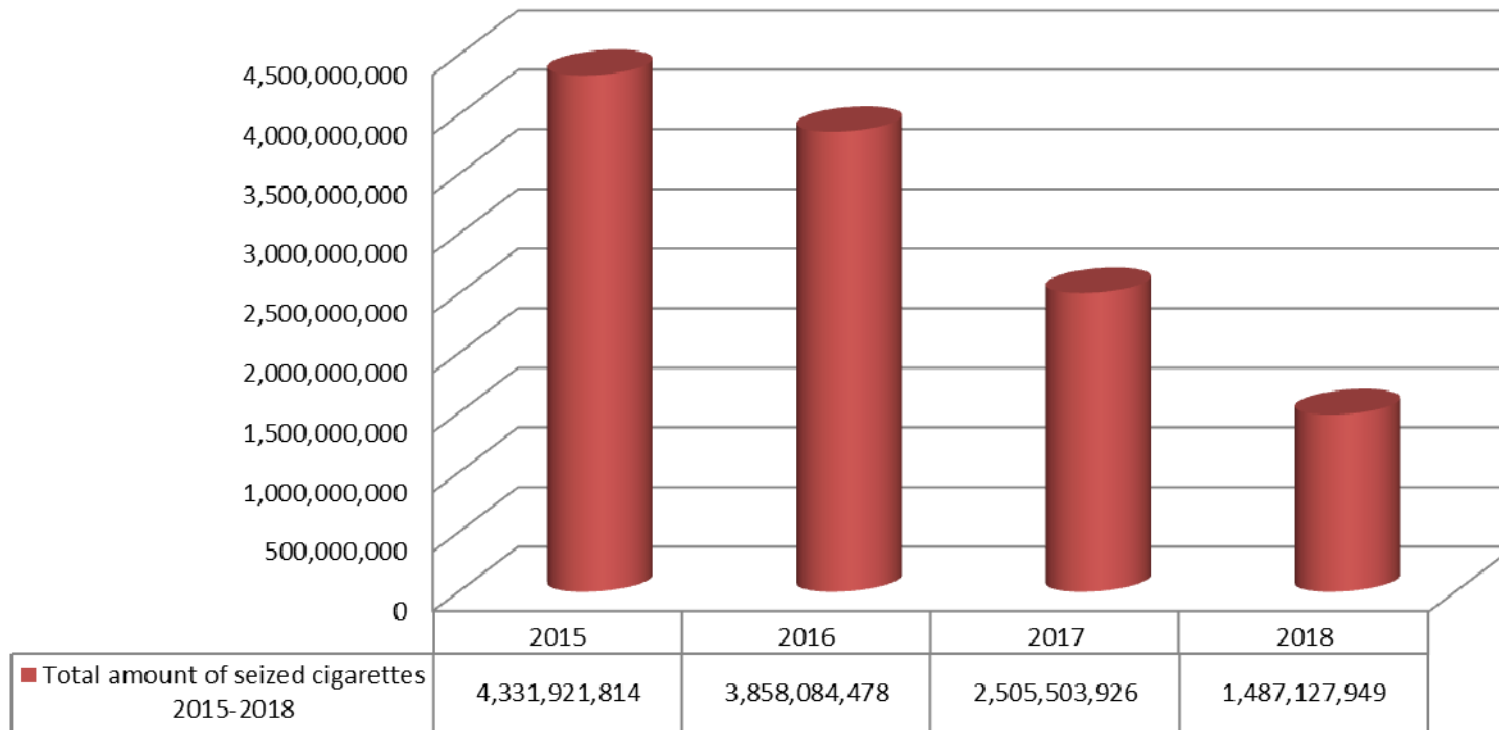
# METHODOLOGY

THE REPORT IS MAINLY BASED ON:

- **Annual Questionnaires** for Southeast Europe tobacco products smuggling situation report over the period January-December 2018, provided by 10 SELEC Member States
- **Seizure notifications** for 2018
- **Previous SELEC Annual Reports** for a comparative analysis

# CIGARETTES SEIZURES

**Total amount of seized cigarettes in Southeast Europe  
2015 - 2018**



- Close to 1.5 billion cigarettes seized
- 41% drop compared to level recorded in 2017 (2.5 billion)



# 2019 Report on the situation of cigarettes and tobacco smuggling - Conclusions -



- Cigarettes smuggling remains a **great threat in our region** and it helps fuel other transnational crimes
- The itineraries inside Southeast Europe are dynamic, and most of the countries in our region represent **transit areas** towards other markets
- The dynamic of illicit tobacco market has changed, with less contraband of the major international producers; most cases of seized cigarettes in the region consist of **cheap-whites** and even counterfeits of cheap-whites
- **Online trade** has seen an increase over the last couple of years. Surface web and the Darknet has become an important tool for criminals all over the world, representing an important facilitator in illicit goods smuggling

# Organized Crime Threat Assessment OCTA SEE 2018

- 2 versions:

restricted and public





# Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2018



Strategic report **identifying and assessing the threats** faced by the SELEC Member States

The assessment covers relevant aspects occurred during the past **five years** (2013 – 2017)

Provides **valuable facts** to the stakeholders and law enforcement bodies in general

COCTA SEE intends to cast more light on the **understanding of crime in the region**





# KNOW-HOW III Regional Operation



**TARGET:** counterfeit goods

**TIMEFRAME:** from 12<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2018

**PARTICIPATION:**  
all Member States

**2,180** exchanges  
of information

Estimated value:





# Type of goods seized



Commodities	Number of seizures	Quantity
Cigarettes	225	12,965,380 (pieces)
Accessories	40	52,122 (pieces)
Clothing	88	33,106 (pieces)
Medicines	21	32,394 (pieces)
Footwear	37	25,069 (pieces)
Other	12	22,978 (pieces)
Tobacco products	49	20,538 kg
Cosmetics	29	6,258 (pieces)
Toys	6	5,850 (pieces)
Auto spare parts	4	5,197 (pieces)
Bed clothes	1	2,827 (pieces)
Mobile phones and equipment for mobile phones	8	1,811 (pieces)
Food products	2	761 (pieces)
Household items	22	163 kg



# Project: FAIT - Fight Against Illegal Trade



## Objective 1

- Setting up SELEC Operational Centre Unit (OCU) in order to increase the operational capacity of the LEAs against illegal trade

## Objective 2

- Training for specialists on the latest technology, special techniques and special investigative methods for better results in the fight against smuggling of goods (VR)

## Objective 3

- Social-media awareness campaign against smuggling activities



**THANK YOU**

Valentin NICULESCU  
Director for Operations