

# EU-SOCTA 2025



Cornelia Riehle

## News

On 18 March 2025, Europol published its [EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2025](#) (EU-SOCTA 2025). The EU-SOCTA is Europol's flagship report. Published every four years, it provides a comprehensive overview of the threats posed by serious and organised crime in Europe. The report identifies key criminal activities, the dynamics of criminal networks, and emerging trends. For the 2021 SOCTA Report → [euclid 2/2021, 90](#).

In four chapters, the new report examines the changes in serious and organised crime, the tactics of serious and organised crime, the changing shape of the EU criminal landscape, and the geographies of criminal networks.

Overall, the report states that the profound changes taking place in serious and organised crime (SOC) are further exacerbating the threat they pose to the EU. The SOC threat is evident in a number of ways, such as:

- Double destabilising effect on the EU and its society (1) through the generation of illicit revenues and parallel economies, and (2) through criminal networks which increasingly act as proxies for hybrid threat actors (a form of cooperation that is mutually reinforcing);
- Being increasingly nurtured online, with more and very impactful criminal activities happening largely in the digital space;
- Accelerating by AI and other new technologies, making criminal operations more accessible and automated, increasing scale and reach of crime, and enhancing criminal capabilities.

In terms of crime areas, the EU-SOCTA 2025 identifies the following key threats:

- *Online threats* such as cyber-attacks, online fraud schemes, (online) child sexual exploitation. Cyber-attacks are increasingly state-aligned, targeting critical infrastructure and government structures. Online fraud schemes have become unprecedented in size, variety, sophistication, and reach and are expected to outpace other types of serious and organised crime. With generative AI being used to produce child sexual abuse material, (online) child sexual exploitation is transforming.
- *Physical threats* in cross-border crime areas like migrant smuggling, drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, and waste crime. All areas show a continuous diversification of modi operandi, shifting and further expanding under the influence of developments in technology, AI, and the online sphere.

The report concludes that the identified key threats have a number of elements in common that sustain and boost them in varying ways. Law enforcement must integrate these cross-cutting elements when designing approaches to fight the key criminal threats and it must confront reinforcing tactics, such as the use of digital platforms for money laundering activities, the infiltration of legal business structures, and the

### AUTHOR

**Cornelia Riehle**

Deputy Head of Section  
Academy of European Law

---

Published in  
2025, Vol. 20(1) euclid  
ISSN: 1862-6947  
<https://euclid.eu>

---



exploitation of young perpetrators. Developments need to be closely monitored - particularly in the EU neighbourhood but also beyond.

---

## About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and “criministrative” law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to [eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de](mailto:eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de) to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**