



Research Paper

Understanding organized crime and the Albanian case

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ABSTRACT: *Organized crime consists of general criminal activity that has been structured. Criminal organizations structure themselves to form types of associations, in order to be more efficient in their line of “work” and also to generate large amounts of income. By grouping together and working their way out to a common goal, it is quite easy for these criminal associations to not only fulfill their intended purposes but also control large amounts of territory, controlling the destination of narcotics etc. In return, the criminal association generate large amounts of income, turning this criminal activity into a proper business. The following article will explore the criminal phenomenon of organized crime, especially taking under consideration the various legal regulations in different countries of the world and also the Albanian case.*

KEY WORDS: *organized crime, criminality, structure, crime*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the earliest forms of organized crime in the world would be the general activity of pirates that controlled the seas. They conducted large scale trades in stolen goods, had a solid structure and were considered dangerous “sea bandits” between the years 1650-1726 (Library of Congress 2021).

These “sea bandits” controlled large portions of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean, creating a very dangerous and risky environment for ships travelling in those regions. ¹ What defined the great era of piracy, was that the pirates were organized. They didn’t just commit random crimes. This organization and structure made them quite more successful into their criminal endeavors.

In the United States of America organized crime showed its presence in the late XIX and early XX century. This was due to a large number of populations that lived during these times in various important American cities. Moreover, organized American crime during these times also reflected social and ethnic dimensions, for example in Irish neighborhoods gangs like “*O’Connell’s Guards*” operated. Italian, Chinese and African American neighborhoods followed suit as well. (Organized Crime 2023).

Organized crime showed signs of vitality also in Europe, with perhaps the most infamous cases were the Italian mafia dating back in the XIX century in Southern Italy.

Nowadays, organized crime is far more powerful, dynamic and dangerous than the examples provided above. The main area of interest of organized crimes is narcotics, human being trafficking, bribery, large scale fraud, money laundering etc. Large criminal associations control large portions of entire cities around the world. The scale of organization and structure is so good that they almost operate as a parallel “government” in those areas. Everything is controlled by these criminal associations and the repercussions to whoever that decides to go against them are fatal. The following article will delve the nature of organized crime, what it is, how is it properly organized and the case of Albania.

1. LEGALLY DEFINING ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime or also known as transnational crime is provisioned and regulated not only by the national legislation of a specific country, but also by international conventions and treaties. The most important one regarding transnational crime is the Convention of Palermo (UN 2004). This main aim of the Convention is to not only define the criminal phenomenon of transnational organized crime but also to promote cooperation between countries but also combating it more efficiently. The Palermo Convention defines transnational crime as following:

¹ Ibid

“Agreeing with one or more other persons to commit a serious crime for a purpose relating directly or indirectly to the obtaining of a financial or other material benefit and, where required by domestic law, involving an act undertaken by one of the participants in furtherance of the agreement or involving an organized criminal group.”²

So, the key element to transnational organized crime also by the standards of the Convention of Palermo, is the following:

- a. Cooperation between at least 2 or more people;
- b. Committing a serious crime;
- c. The purpose of the offenders is to benefit directly or indirectly financially or some other form of material benefit from the crime;

Naturally the first element for the existence of organized transnational crime is the cooperation between 2 or more people. The cooperation between these individuals shouldn't be something random. The cooperation should be premeditated between them, it should be stable in time and in between the hierarchy of the group. When it comes to transnational organized crime it should be noted that the criminal association or the criminal structure usually has a form of hierarchy. The leaders of the group are the decision-makers at the top of the pyramid. Right below them comes everybody else that is part of the group and has a role to fulfill.

Secondly, since we established that the cooperation in the criminal organized association is a special form of cooperation, it should be emphasized that these offenders that are in these circumstances, agree to committing a serious crime. How exactly can it be defined a serious crime? The Convention of Palermo gives the following definition when it comes to the term serious crime:

““Serious crime” shall mean conduct constituting an offence punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least four years or a more serious penalty;”³.

Usually crimes that constitute an offense punishable by a maximum deprivation of liberty of at least 4 year, include but not limited to, human being, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, etc.,.

Lastly, the third element that needs to be present when talking about organized transnational crime, is the motive of the perpetrators. Typically, the motive involves financial benefits directly or indirectly for them. On the other hand, it may also include some other type of benefit. For example, if an organized association has large quantities of monetary funds that are a byproduct of the criminal activity, they will try to transform them into legal funds. This is in essence money laundering. By utilizing complex financial transfers of funds, the criminal organization “cleans” the funds, thus making it possible to be utilized. (CFI 2023). Furthermore, the criminal association might also use other means or tools in order to make money laundering. One way is by creating shell companies and recruiting foreign investors for these companies. By doing so the criminal association has served its purpose in “cleaning” the money, that then can be recycled back into the economy. ⁴

So, these were some of the international provisions when it comes to transnational organized crime. Obviously without taking into consideration bilateral or multilateral agreements between various countries, the criminal phenomenon of organized transnational crime is provisioned also in the national legislation of various countries. When it comes to the proper constitution organized international crime different countries provide for definitions that are somewhat similar to the one given in the Convention of Palermo.

Nevertheless, a few points must be addressed when talking about organized crime and other types of crime like white collar crime or terrorism.

Since we already established that organized crime is usually the criminal activity organized by two or more individuals that commit a serious crime in order to have financial benefit, any other type of benefit, what differentiates a criminal organization to a governmental official involved in various forms of corruption, bribery and more?

² Article 5 of the Convention of Palermo

³ Ibid pg 13

⁴ Ibid

In order to gauge the differences between these two completely criminal moments, we should bear in mind the core characteristics of each criminal activity. When it comes to “White collar” crime, we are dealing with a perpetrator that is part of a *legitimate* governmental organization but commits various criminal acts, for example, corruption. So, this perpetrator is part of an association, that is in its core legitimate and is in no way a deviation of the law and legislation. (Albanese 2011). When a governmental official decides to violate the law and commit an offense that is punishable by law, unless it is explicitly stated that the official has links to the organized criminal world, they will be responsible for “white collar” crime, depending on the type of criminal offense they have committed. While the criminal organization is an entirely illegal association that has a structure, commits serious crimes and whose main objective is various financial or otherwise types of benefits.

Yet, the link between organized crime and “white collar” crime is still noticeable in certain aspects. Sometimes the serious crimes committed by individuals in governmental institutions are quite severe and sometimes they do overlap with crimes committed by criminal organizations.⁵

For example, when an economically powerful and influential criminal organization wants to expand its reach in the public sector, in order to achieve that it might need to corrupt and bribe very high-ranking officials. If the criminal organization, is “successful” in its endeavors, it might result in some of the highest-ranking governmental officials being completely controlled by it, thus effectively controlling the whole government. How does the criminal organization actually control the governmental officials? This is done through either bribery and/or extortion accordingly on a case by case basis. The most problematic sector remains public procurement procedures, because:

- a. It shows that the criminal organization has ties with high ranking officials that are often representatives of highly important governmental institutions;
- b. The criminal organization has access to public funds;

By having financial and “official” power, the criminal organization becomes even more powerful and can virtually become untouchable from the law. Concerns with criminal organizations being involved in public procurement have been noticed in countries like Italy or Albania.

Another type or area of crime that can sometime interact with organized crime is terrorism. More specifically when terrorist organization make use of organized crime activity to fund their objectives.⁶ For example, in a series of raids, in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, FBI arrested 18 people for what they called “*A broad conspiracy to aid the Militant Islamic Organization of Hezbollah*”, through trafficking contrabanded cigarettes, money laundering etc., (Firestone 2000). These single actions prove that sometimes terroristic organizations and organized crime crisscross with one another on certain circumstances.

So far, I have tried to present a general panorama regarding organized crime, what it exactly is and how and why it crosses paths with other forms of criminality. The second and last part of this article will explore and compare the different legal provisions of various European countries when it comes to the organized crime and then the case of Albania, where there are reports that organized crime has achieved significant proportions.

2. COMPARATIVE ASPECTS ON ORGANIZED CRIME IN VARIOUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

As discussed above one definition that could be given to organized crime is a continuing criminal association or enterprise, whose main motive is the generation of large amounts of income from the criminal activity. Generating large amounts of income is the main purpose of the criminal association, which is done by committing a serious crime that is in high demand from the public.⁸ In other words, the criminal association does not commit criminal activity randomly or in an unplanned manner. Rather everything is organized and planned by the structure of the criminal association.

The Belgian Criminal Code defines organized crime as “...*The structured association of more than two persons, established over time, with a view to committing in a concerted manner, crimes and offences punishable by imprisonment for three years or a more serious penalty, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, pecuniary advantages...*”⁹.

⁵ Ibid pg 6

⁶ Ibid pg 6

⁷ Hezbollah is mostly recognized as a terrorist organization by a number of countries worldwide, including some the member states of the EU. For more information on this matter please see <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hezbollah/hezbollah-a-recognized-terrorist-organization/> last visited April 14, 2023

⁸ For example, narcotics trafficking

⁹ Article 324 bis and Article 324 ter Criminal Code of Belgium https://legislationline.org/sites/default/files/documents/6e/BELG_CC_fr.pdf last visited 03.04.2023

From an objective point of view according to the Belgian criminal law, it is imperative of organized crime to be an association between two or more people, established and sustainable and directly or indirectly want to obtain monetary advantages over time. This definition provided by the Belgian Criminal Code, with few differences is present in almost all of the criminal laws of various countries in the world and also quite similar to the Convention of Palermo as well.

Furthermore, it is criminally prosecuted and charged whoever that decides to be a member of the criminal association, regardless of their exact role in the criminal association. In other words, since the criminal association follows a well-defined hierarchal structure, not everyone is responsible for a crime committed at a specific moment in time. However, the law incriminates everyone that is part of or a member of the criminal association, regardless. The only requirement for the proceeding of this crime is that the offender associated with the criminal organization has from a subjective point of view the “will” or *dolus*, to be part of the criminal association. So, it is imperative for the criminal law that the offender “knows” that they are part of a criminal association and are acting in accordance with the orders given by this criminal organization.

This element constitutes a very important moment when it comes to the criminal liability, because the offender has to “know” that they are part of a criminal association. The offender not only “knows” fully well that they are part of the criminal association but also, they understand the repercussions of being a member of the criminal association. The fact that the law gives so much importance to the will or *dolus* of the offenders when it comes to these cases, proves to show the societal dangerousness of the crime association. In some cases, the criminal law incriminates anyone that is part of the association without having committed a single criminal offense at the time of arrest.

In conclusion the criminal liability in Belgium regarding the willful participation in a criminal organization, constitutes in a crime of a “formal nature”. The perpetrator is criminally responsible since the moment they become a member of the organization, without needing to commit additional crimes. Bearing this in mind, during the proceedings if the perpetrator has committed for example the crime of money laundering, they will be held account during the proceeding for two counts. One for being a member of the criminal organization *and* money laundering. This is an important moment to emphasize especially from the procedural point of view, because if a perpetrator is charged with more than one criminal count, it will affect the whole proceeding and ultimately the sentencing. When it comes to sentencing someone charged with multiple counts, different countries follow different rules accordingly to their respective national legislation.

A similar position as the one described above is also the case with the Croatian Criminal Code where Article 328 “Criminal Association” paragraph 2 reads as following:

“2) Whoever participates in an association referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, ***without having yet committed a single criminal offence for that association, or undertakes an action that is not a criminal offence in itself***, but which he knows contributes to the achievement of a goal of a criminal association, or financially or otherwise supports a criminal association, will be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.”

What can be emphasized in this case however is that the definition provided by the Croatian Criminal Law, is that this whole Article has a formal character, similar to the Belgian case. In other words, in order to be punishable by law, a person that operates in Croatia, simply needs to be part of the group without having committed a single criminal offence. Now this moment is particularly important because, it incriminates the offender just by pure association. In this specific paragraph of the Croatian Criminal Law, states and incriminates the criminal organization and the people part of it. This proves to show the societal dangerousness of the criminal organization.

A similar approach is also being followed by the Albanian Criminal Code where articles 333 and 333/a (QBZ 2023), defines that the participation in a criminally structured group is enough in the eyes of the law for the criminal liability to start. In this case the Albanian, Belgian and the Croatian criminal law are quite similar in these terms.

Quite interesting is the case of Italy. In Article 416 of the Italian Criminal Law, the criminal association is provisioned. (Codice Penale Italiano 2017). The Italian Criminal law defines the criminal association as an association of 3 or more offenders that commit a serious crime. What is interesting in the case of the Italian criminal law is also the fact that is punishable by law also whoever “promotes” the criminal association. The element of promotion hasn’t been seen in the other cases. But what does “promotion” exactly mean in the context of the Italian law? The promotion in this regard can be seen as the incitement of a perpetrator to recruit new “members” for the criminal organization or to create a new proper criminal organization. The Italian law provisions the “promotion” of the criminal organization, in order to prove once more again the societal dangerousness of the criminal organization.

Paragraph two of the same article stipulates the pure association of the criminal organization. This means that an offender shall suffer the legal repercussions, just by being a member of the association, further proving that this type of criminal offense has a formal character. Another common trait with the legislations studied above.

Moreover, Article 416-bis of the Italian Criminal Code, concerns the *mafiosa* association ("*associazione di tipo mafioso*"), which is another form of organized crime. The mafia association is an organization that uses the power of intimidation, in order to commit crimes or to directly affect economic activities, public procurement services, elections etc.

For an organized criminal association to have a *mafia* nature when it comes to the Italian law, it is important for the offenders to fulfill a number of requisites from an objective point of view. For example, the participants of the mafia association make use of an intimidating force and of *omerta*¹⁰ when being part of the mafia association.

In the case of Italy, it is particularly interesting the fact that the Italian law recognizes the mafia association as a different form of organized crime. Surely the mafia association is organized crime however it has its own specific legal basis when it comes to the criminal law. This means that the mafia association even though is part of the organized crime, it has a different nature comparably.

According to Europol concepts like family, power, respect and territory are fundamental when it comes to understanding the proper nature of the mafia organization.¹¹ These bonds are so important to the mafia organization, that even the Italian law describes the principle of *omerta*. *Omerta* is a characteristic of participants in a mafia group, which basically means an extreme sense of loyalty of the participants of the mafia group and to never surrender in front of the authorities. Since the first mafia groups originated from Sicily from Southern Italy, they also have a proverb that emphasizes the importance of *omerta*:

*“Cu è surdu, orbu e taci, campa cent'anni 'mpaci,
he who is deaf, blind and silent will live 100 years in peace.”*

This simple proverb shows the different nature of the mafia association, its deeply rooted connections and traditions with the family, land, respect and most importantly loyalty on top of the criminally charged motive. All of these elements make the mafia association not only incredibly societally dangerous but also incredibly difficult to fully eradicate because of its particular nature. The most infamous mafia families include in Italy, Cosa Nostra, Ndraghetta and Camorra (Kovic 2021). They have been around for a long time and still operate in the criminal world having ties and connections not only in Italy but also in other parts of the world.

In **Spain**, the Criminal Code stipulates the organized crime in Article 515.1 “Crimes against the Constitution” making the following provisions: (Spain Criminal Code 2023).

“Unlawful associations shall be punishable; the following being deemed as such:

- 1. Those whose purpose is to commit any criminal offence or that, having been constituted, encourage commission thereof;*
- 2. Those that use violent means or alteration or control of personality to achieve their object, even if such an object is lawful;*
- 3. Organisations of a paramilitary nature;*

What is interesting in the case of the Spanish criminal law is that the criminal association is located in the section of “Crimes against the Constitution” in the respective law. This means that the creation and implementation of a criminal association in Spain is viewed as a crime against the constitutional order of the country. If we were to compare it to the Albanian case for example, crimes against the constitutional order of the country exist however they have a typically different nature in our legal system. For example, the types of crimes that are provisioned in our Criminal Code and are against the Constitutional order of the country are insurgency, assassination plot against

¹⁰ Extreme form of loyalty between mafia members in face of authority.

¹¹ Europol “Mafia structured organized crime group” <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-statistics/crime-areas/mafia-structured-organised-crime-groups-ocg> last visited on 04.04.2024.

head of states etc., shows that the nature of these types of criminal offenses is very different. On the other hand, some types of criminal organizations have become so powerful and exercise a huge influence, they can potentially reach and control the whole government. Thus, effectively undermining democracy and the constitutional order of a country. From this point of view, I think that the classification of the criminal organization in this group of criminal offenses, isn't that far-fetched.

Anyways, organized crime, criminal organization and structured criminal group belong in their own Section of the Albanian Criminal Code and are not seen as crimes against the constitutional order of the country.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that the jurisprudence of the Spanish Supreme Court differentiates¹² the notion of participation to an organisation from simple criminal collaboration, and points out that organisation should be understood as what the concept itself indicates: the involvement of two or more people, a hierarchical structure and continuity, the existence of a plan with a distribution of roles. The crimes these organization commits aren't random or little pre planned. In fact, the structure and organization is very clear in its goals and the ways they are going to achieve it. This jurisprudential differentiation is important because it gives a totally different and new meaning to the criminal organization. By pointing out specific elements of the *mens rea* and *actus reus* provides for a more cohesive legal approach to the criminal organization in Spain.

To recapitulate the criminal association in Spain needs to fulfil the following criteria in order to be identified as a proper criminal association:

1. The existence of a number of people within the criminal association.
2. The existence of a structure, where the members are organized in a structure in the form of a hierarchy. Usually the members on the top of the structure are the people giving orders and usually benefiting more financially or otherwise from the criminal activity carried out by the rest of the criminal association.
3. The criminal collaboration isn't done randomly or for short periods of time. In fact, a typical aspect of the criminal association is the fact that it is quite time sustainable and cohesive.
4. The main motive of the offenders is committing various crimes. The Spanish Criminal law doesn't establish what types of crimes can a criminal association commit, leaving it to law enforcing agencies to prosecute the offenders on the specific crime they have consumed. It is also important to emphasise that in Spain, similarly to other countries that have been taken under consideration until now, a person is criminally liable just by purely being part of the criminal association, thus incriminating firstly the "membership" in the group and then other crimes they might have committed as part of it.

3. THE CASE OF ALBANIA

From a legal point of view Albania has approved and implemented a number of laws (without taking into consideration the provisions of the Criminal Code) in order to combat the criminal association and everything related to it.

The most notable pieces of legislation in this area are:

- a. Law number 95/2016 "On the organization and cooperation of institutions to fight corruption and organized crime" (KLP 2016). This law is particularly important because one of its main areas of interest is organized crime and the institutional cooperation that is needed to combat this criminal activity.
- b. Law number 9917, dated 19.5.2008, "On the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism", as amended. (Drejtësia 2008). This law aims to prevent the laundering of money and its byproducts originating from the criminal activity.

¹² For more information on Spanish jurisprudence on organized crime please see <https://www.poderjudicial.es/search/AN/openDocument/69aace54eff3dc25/20160418> last visited April 6th 2023

c. Law no. 10192, dated 3.12.2009, "On the elimination and suppression of organized crime and trafficking, through prohibitive measures against property", (Prokuroria e Pergjithshme 2009) are also applied to the property of people, on whom there is a reasonable suspicion, based on evidence, of participation in criminal organizations or armed gangs. This law is also known as the "anti-mafia" law in Albania, and it details the seizure of assets and the related procedures of administration of such assets.

d. Normative act nr.1/2020 "On preventive measures in the framework of strengthening the fight against terrorism, organized crime, serious crimes and the consolidation of public security order" (Normative Act 2020). This normative act provides for the preventive measures of a temporary nature within the framework of strengthening of the fight against organized criminal organizations and groups, terrorist organizations, armed gangs, individuals involved in serious crimes, as well as the procedures, competences and criteria for the application of these measures to the subjects of this normative act.

Additionally, to all the above-mentioned legislation there is also the provisions of the Albanian Criminal Code Chapter XI "Criminal acts committed by an armed gang or criminal organization", (QBZ 2023), Articles 333 and sequential. Discussing the nature of the legal provisions of the Albanian Criminal Code regarding the criminal association, at this point, could result to be redundant because the legal provisions are quite similar to the legal provisions of the other countries described above.

The Albanian law requires the element of existence of a group that has a structure and some form of hierarchy. It is a criminal provision that is of a formal nature, meaning that a person will be criminally liable just by pure association with the group. This could also mean that the person could be part of a criminal organization, and not having yet committed a crime, and still be criminally charged just because they are part of the organization at the moment of arrest. If the person part of the criminal organization has also committed other crimes in addition to being a just a member, for example premediated murder, narcotics trafficking etc., they will be charged with 2 or more different criminal charges. In this case there is a concurrence between the crimes provisioned in Chapter XI of the Albanian CC and the other crime(s) committed successively. All of this results in the production of a more severe charging and sentencing during the court proceedings.

According to Global Organized Crime Index (OCindex 2023), Albania has a criminality index of 5.6 ranking 9th in Europe. According to the same report Albania serves as a transit destination for the smuggling of human beings and illicit drugs. It is reported that "mafia-style" organizations exist and operate in Albania. These criminal organizations are involved with the trafficking of hard drugs like cocaine and heroin originating from South America.¹³ However, Albanian criminal groups aren't just concerned with transporting. They also are involved in distribution as well, thus exercising a greater and bigger influence.

When it comes to the criminal actors, the criminal organizations in Albania do have some aspects of "Mafia groups", however they rarely express or showcase symbols or names, like the Italian mafia groups. However, they do have a clear structure, hierarchy and follow the orders of a single person or a group of people.¹⁴ There have been reports lately that Albanian-style mafia groups are shifting towards public procurement as well, an element which is similar to the Italian mafia groups. Albania mafia groups also cooperate well with other criminal groups around the world, exercising a more and greater influence, with evidence of collaboration with the Cartel of Sinaloa (El Universal 2022).

One of the main issues organized crime has is the influx of money that needs to become "legitimate" or "cleaned" in order to be used at its full potential. Some of the best ways Albanian criminal organizations have found in order to make the money legitimate is through investing in construction companies. One illustrative case is the case of a man allegedly accused of drug trafficking, is wanted by the Italian police and has built in Tirana, a set of luxurious villas. (Qyno 2016). This case was discovered by an investigative journalist; however, it is the job of the prosecutor to fully investigate these claims. This is just one of the many examples organized crime tries to launder money in Albania. Other cases may also include call center fraud, development in the coastal region of the country etc.

In conclusion, the Albanian organized crime landscape has proved to be highly dangerous and dynamic, exercising influence not only in the underground but also in our public lives. Criminal groups are taking part also in public

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

procurement, thus profiting directly from public funds and incriminating whole institutions and public officials. They are laundering the money mostly through development plans all over the country, call center fraud etc. When it comes to the form of organization, there are various types of organizations, even a type of “Albanian mafia-style” group is said to exist, however with few differences compared to Italian mafia.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Organized crime is a criminal phenomenon whose main characteristics are:

1. Organization
2. Sustainability in time and space
3. Crimes are committed for economic profit or other type of benefit.

The criminal organization usually consists of at least 2 or more individuals that agree to commit various crimes during a period of time in order to gain monetary or otherwise types of benefits. The “sustainability” of the criminal organization shouldn’t be confused with a simple or random criminal collaboration. The cooperation in the criminal organization is on a completely different level. Lastly, the economic profit or other benefit, is one of the main motives for the existence of this criminal organization. Originating from illegal activities, the criminal organization makes large quantities of money which then are re-cycled back into the economy in different ways. One example is the involvement of organized criminal groups in public procurement procedures or various development plans.

Of all of the countries discussed above, the definition of organized crime was more or less the same with slight variations. One of the main differences were in the case of Italy where besides the criminal organization, the law also stipulates the “Mafia-type organization”. The mafia type organization and the criminal organization or group might seem similar, but they are not the same thing. For example, the “Mafia-type organization” originated in the XIX century in Southern Italy and has a number of principles on which it is founded, like family, land etc., they have a code of extreme loyalty in face of authority also known as *omerta*. While on the other hand, the criminal association not necessarily follows suit. In the case of the Albanian-style mafia, the criminal group isn’t so much related to the family, land etc. The Albanian-style mafia has a more pragmatic approach and rarely display symbols or names. In such case, can the Albanian criminal association be described as a “Mafia type”? Strictly speaking from the Italian perspective no, however the nuances are far too many to ignore. In my opinion there are elements of a mafia style criminal group within the Albanian criminal groups, but variations do exist.

Another country that was displayed a different angle to the criminal association is also Spain. In Spain being part of a criminal organization is a crime against the constitutional order of the country. Now these provisions were quite interesting because usually criminal associations have their own specific sections in the Criminal Codes of various countries.

Now if we return to the Albanian case, reports of criminal groups and associations are many. These groups use Albania as a transit country for human being trafficking, people smuggling, narcotics trafficking etc. However, the Albanian criminal groups have created ties with other criminal groups from all over the world, thus increasing exponentially their influence worldwide. Lately, there has also been evidence of Albanian criminal groups taking part in public procurement procedures with official institutions in Albania. All of this incriminates not only the procedure per se, but also the public officials that agree to qualify members of various criminal organizations. In conclusion, the Albanian organized groups pose a great societal dangerousness, operate in structures and have important ties with the crime world, worldwide.

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