

Organised crime and its dangers - an overview of trends in Slovenia in the period 1995-1999

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The author deals in his paper with the issue of the danger of organised crime. After stating that criminal offences typical of organised crime are not very severely sanctioned in comparison to other offences, he tries to identify other criteria which allow the conclusion - generally accepted by the professional and scientific community - that this type of crime is dangerous. The review of literature has shown that the level of economic damage caused, the mass involvement in organised crime offences (together with their persistent repetition and ruthless methods of operation), underground operation of criminal gangs and the neutralisation of criminal prosecution, represent dangers which justify the general assumption that organised crime creates the potential of formation of a parallel social system; it would have an autonomous value and normative system and its own system of mutual relationships and would provide an actual and sinister alternative to the existing socio-economic system.

However, all findings related to the danger of organised crime, in contrast to basic knowledge of organised crime, do not have any appropriate empirical verification. By analysing trends in Slovenia for the period 1995 - 1999, based on the available statistical data, the author finds that underground operation of criminal gangs and the neutralisation of criminal prosecution in subsequent phases of criminal procedure cannot be tested, due to the lack of data and adequate records; in connection with the amount of economic damage and massive involvement in organised crime offences, the author draws attention to problems related to the collection of statistical data. In the author's opinion, disregard of these data could lead to the conclusion that organised crime has actually not been so dangerous in Slovenia, which may prove fatal with the emergence of some other statistical "image", since it would not be possible to justify on such grounds any (special) criminal law measures aimed at the protection of the economic system, the transformation of which is carefully observed by organised crime.

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