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## It is possible to predict the evolution of mafia and terrorism groups

Transcrime (the Research Centre on Transnational Crime of the Università Cattolica in Milan) has been awarded the PROTON project, an Horizon 2020 European programme. With the collaboration of 22 partners, this programme will develop computer models to forecast the growth of criminal and terrorist organizations and to test different types of action to prevent and combat them.

Milan, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 - **PROTON** (Modelling the PRocesses leading to Organised crime and TerrOrist Networks) **has received funding from the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Commission** amounting to more than 4.4 million euros. **Professor Ernesto Ugo Savona**, Director of Transcrime, the Research Centre on Transnational Crime of the Università Cattolica in Milan, states that "Horizon 2020 is the most prestigious programme of applied research in Europe. It finances high-quality projects with applied outcomes for both research and policy-making". "PROTON", adds Savona, "won against 21 other proposals from countries and research centres throughout Europe. It is a success for Italy, the Catholic University, and the Transcrime Centre that confirms the quality of Italian criminological research and its importance at international level. The key to PROTON's success has been its ability to identify a strong innovative idea by integrating computer and social sciences, and coordinating **a consortium of 22 partners of excellence in more than ten countries**. Apart from the Catholic University of Milan, the main partners will be the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Fraunhofer Foundation (the largest organization for applied research in Europe), IBM, and the National Research Council."

The analysis of project PROTON will cover all 28 EU member states. PROTON project will **develop forecasting models through an innovative integration of social and computer sciences**. Researchers from various countries will investigate the social, psychological and economic factors that lead to the development of criminal and terrorist organizations. These factors will be the inputs to a PROTON-S computer model that will test the impact of different scenarios on organized crime and terrorism. For example, PROTON-S will evaluate whether and how changes in levels of the integration of foreigners or the legalization of soft drugs influence the development of criminal and terrorist networks.

The consortium will also develop PROTON Wizard, a user-friendly software program that will help authorities and policy-makers to assess the various options for action to prevent and combat mafia and terrorism organizations. **"It is**



**essential that EU policies in regard to complex crime be based on sound science**, thereby reducing the space for manipulations and stereotypes”, says Savona. “PROTON Wizard will function as an information dashboard for those at European, national or local level called upon to develop effective policies to prevent and combat crime and terrorism. In this way we shall reduce the distance between the level of research and that of operational decision-making.”

To ensure efficacious results in operational terms, the consortium comprises institutions such as Europol, the municipality of Palermo, the European Crime Prevention Network, the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna.

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