

IP CRIME AND ITS LINK TO OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES Focus on Poly-Criminality

Executive Summary



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Intellectual property crime case book

The aim of this report is to inform law enforcement officials and policy makers about the various ways in which IP crime is linked to other forms of criminal activity. The report is in the form of a case book, presenting case examples where IP crime is linked to other forms of criminality.

There are two ways IP crime can be linked to other criminal activities: with one criminal activity supporting the other, or as parallel activities.

In the case of supporting criminal activities, the relationship can go two ways. First, other forms of criminal behaviour can be used to facilitate IP crime. For example, some organised crime groups (OCGs) produce fraudulent documents in order to sell their counterfeit goods as legitimate ones. In that case, IP crime is the supported criminal activity. Alternatively, criminals might engage in counterfeiting to generate profit that is used for other types of serious and organised crime, such as drug trafficking or terrorism. In that case, IP crime is the supporting criminal activity.

In the case of parallel criminal activities, OCGs engage in different forms of criminal behaviour that are relatively independent of each other. They can either be entirely unconnected or interlinked, but without one activity clearly facilitating the other. An example of the latter is an OCG that uses the same route or transportation method for the trafficking of counterfeit goods and other illicit products.

The case examples in this report illustrate how a wide range of different crimes are linked to IP crime, including money laundering, document fraud, cybercrime, fraud, drug production and trafficking and terrorism. They illustrate that the idea of IP crime as a victimless crime is misguided and can result in a lack of attention for the harm resulting from these criminal activities. Awareness of the links between IP crime and other crime areas can help law enforcement officials to better recognise them in future cases, and support decision makers in addressing them at a policy level.

