

**14 JANUARY 2023**

### **HOW EEL SMUGGLERS IN SPAIN MAKE A FORTUNE SENDING THEM TO ASIA**

On 13 January, an article in The Olive Press said that the recent arrest of 2 men with 190kg of elvers (young glass eels) has highlighted once more the illegal trade. Since 2010, the export of eels has been banned from the EU as it threatened their existence. Many go to China, where they are fattened up before sending on elsewhere, including Japan, where they are considered a delicacy.

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2023/01/13/slippery-customers-how-eel-smugglers-in-spain-make-a-fortune-sending-elvers-to-asia/>

### **SOUTH AFRICA: FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO CIRCUMVENT DREADED GREY LISTING**

On 13 January, News 24 reported on moves to stay off the FATF grey list with the commencement of South Africa's new General Laws (Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism Financing) Amendment Act. This amends various pieces of legislation to address deficiencies related to combatting money laundering and terrorism financing and bring South Africa into compliance with the global standards set by FATF. FATF will decide in February whether or not South Africa has done enough to avoid the list.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/community-newspaper/vista/sas-financial-strategy-to-circumvent-dreaded-greylisting-20230113>

### **HOW OLIGARCHS USE BRUSSELS TO LAUNDER THEIR REPUTATIONS**

An article in The Spectator on 14 January follows on from the Qatargate scandal, saying that, like Qatar, oligarchs have used the EU as a vehicle for rehabilitating their reputation and diverting attention away from allegations of criminality and controversy. It gave the example of one Kazakh oligarch who assiduously courted European politicians to promote his defence that fraud allegations against him were politically motivated because he was a vocal opponent of the Kazakhstan regime. Multiple parliamentary motions condemned the persecution of 'dissidents' and one even called for his protection. An MEP backing him worked closely with NGO like the Brussels-based Open Dialogue Foundation (ODF) which campaigns against human rights abuses. It is said that the cunning ploy of using political persecution as a diversionary tactic has been effective and the EU Parliament has been a willing accomplice.

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/how-europe-lauders-the-reputation-of-oligarchs/>

### **BANGLADESHI POLITICIAN CLOSE TO PRIME MINISTER HASINA SECRETLY OWNS OVER \$4 MILLION IN NEW YORK REAL ESTATE**

On 13 January, OCCRP reported that Mohammed Abdus Sobhan Miah worked as a cab driver, pizza cook, and drugstore clerk while living in New York City, but a few years after returning to Bangladesh to serve as an aide to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he started secretly snapping up properties in the city worth millions. Over 5 years, his portfolio came to include 9 properties, worth over \$4 million in total. In Bangladesh, he is a long-serving member of the ruling Awami League party, he has served as a personal aide to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and today is an MP. It notes that Bangladeshi resident citizens have to report offshore properties or foreign income to tax authorities, but that Miah's tax returns, on file with the Bangladesh Election Commission, listed no assets in New York. <https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/bangladeshi-politician-close-to-prime-minister-hasina-secretly-owns-over-4-million-in-new-york-real-estate>

### **AMSTERDAM'S SCHIPHOL AIRPORT BECOMING ARRIVAL POINT FOR MEXICAN DRUGS**

On 13 January, Insight Crime reported that Dutch authorities have intercepted 3 unusual drug loads from Mexico at the country's main flight hub, Schiphol Airport, highlighting a new trend in drug trafficking to Europe. In December, a report had identified a growing collaboration between Mexican cartels and EU-based criminal networks to smuggle cocaine and methamphetamine into the continent. <https://insightcrime.org/news/amsterdam-schiphol-airport-mexican-drug-reception-point/>

### **HOW US SCIENTISTS ARE COLLABORATING WITH CHINA'S MILITARY: A 'WAKE-UP CALL'**

On 12 January, Newsweek carried an article about examples of collaboration between scientists in the US and its allies and researchers linked to China's military, in a new study seen by *Newsweek*. The study, which focuses primarily on scientists in Germany, reveals a scale of collaboration between scientific institutions in the West and researchers connected with China's military that is far greater than has previously been reported. <https://www.newsweek.com/how-us-scientists-are-collaborating-chinas-military-wake-call-1773079>

### **MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR COPPER THEFT FROM CONTAINERS IN CHILEAN PORT**

On 13 January, Hellenic Shipping News reported that Chilean authorities are investigating a violent theft of several shipping containers filled with copper belonging to state-owned Codelco in San Antonio port.

<https://insurancemarineneews.com/insurance-marine-news/multimillion-dollar-copper-theft-from-containers-in-chilean-port/>

### **ANTWERP AND ROTTERDAM SEIZE 5% OF ESTIMATED GLOBAL COCAINE PRODUCTION**

On 13 January, Hellenic Shipping News reported that in 2022 Antwerp Port seized a record 110 tonnes of cocaine, while the nearby Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands seized a further 50 tonnes. The seizures at the 2 ports are estimated to comprise about 5% of cocaine produced worldwide, based on the most recent UN statistics.

<https://insurancemarineneews.com/insurance-marine-news/antwerp-and-rotterdam-seize-5-of-estimated-global-cocaine-production/>

### **PAKISTANI POLICE BUST ORGAN-TRAFFICKING RING**

On 13 January, Rferl reported that the ring was responsible for luring young, vulnerable victims with promises of lucrative jobs and large pay-outs before removing their organs - mainly kidneys - to sell for up to \$4,000.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-organ-trafficking-ring-busted/32222400.html>

### **AUTHORITIES SEIZE SEVERAL LUXURY CARS FROM ANDREW TATE'S BUCHAREST HOUSE**

On 14 January, the Guardian reported that Romanian authorities have confiscated several luxury cars, including a Rolls-Royce, a BMW and a Mercedes-Benz from Andrew Tate's property in Bucharest. Already prosecutors revealed they had seized 15 luxury vehicles and more than 10 properties as part of investigations into the charges against Tate, 36.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/14/authorities-seize-several-luxury-cars-from-andrew-tates-bucharest-house>

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION STUDY: STRENGTHENING THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: ASSESSING THE EU LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

On 3 January, the EU published this report, saying that the results of the study – a key deliverable of the EU Organised Crime Strategy 2021-2025 – will feed into the Commission's legislative proposal on combating corruption by criminal law. The European Commission contracted this study, carried out by EY and RAND, to analyse the gaps in the EU legislative framework in the area of corruption prevention and repression, to provide recommendations for possible EU measures to address these gaps and to assess and compare their impacts. It finds that an EU intervention could create added

value by contributing to ensuring a level playing field between Member States, hence contributing towards greater harmonisation of national approaches in fighting against corruption.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d7a6cfdb-8fcb-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1>

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/KoIvM842y>

