

Italian Police (SCO) and FBI cooperate on operation "New Bridge"

Last February, an investigation carried out in the context of operation "New bridge" led to the identification of a transatlantic network intended to facilitate the international trade of heroine and cocaine between Calabria and the US.

The new trafficking route had brought together the 'Ndrangheta Ursino clan from Gioiosa Jonica (Reggio Calabria/Italy) and the Gambino crime family of New York/USA.

Twenty-six people were arrested in raids carried out in several Italian cities by officers of the Central Operations Service (SCO), while other operations by FBI agents took place in New York.

This successful joint operation was celebrated yesterday in Rome, at the SCO headquarters, where Director Raffaele Grassi received a delegation from the FBI in New York, led by Assistant Director George Venizelos, in charge of FBI New York Field Office. They were accompanied by some representatives of the US Attorney's Office for Eastern District of New York.

"Collaboration is very important - SCO Director said - and there is a particularly strong relationship between us and the American FBI, which goes back to a project started fifteen years ago".

"The highlight of this operation is the way both countries worked together and used evidence from both sides" stressed Venizelos. "Without us working together we would never have made this case successful".

Among the FBI agents there were some members of Squad 16, which worked closely with SCO's investigators. An undercover FBI agent, known as "Jimmy", contributed significantly to the success of the operation.

The US delegation will be in Palermo today for the 22nd anniversary of the massacres of Capaci and Via D'Amelio. A tribute will be held at the high security court for Mafia trials built inside the walls of Palermo's Ucciardone prison, to remember Judge Giovanni Falcone, and Judge Paolo Borsellino, killed by the Mafia in 1992 together with their bodyguards.

George Venizelos, in charge of FBI New York Field Office, emphasized the meaning of their participation in this ceremony: "It is important because we can not let it happen again that a judge can be killed by the Mafia".

Italian

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