

Organization Attributes Sheet – Unnamed Latvian/CIS Organization

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drug Trafficking
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drug Trafficking: Group(s) is/are responsible for smuggling cocaine from South America, particularly from Ecuador and Colombia, to Latvia and other territories of the former Soviet Union, often via mules, courier mail services, or shipping containers.
C. Scope and Size
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean: Ecuador, Colombia, ¹ the Bahamas²Globally: Latvia, Ukraine, Russian Federation, Lithuania;³ perhaps Belgium, the Netherlands, and the EU in general⁴
D. Leader Characteristics
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
E. Organizational Structure
a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In addition to Latvians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians appear to be prominent members of this group. A Canadian citizen is also reportedly involved in the smuggling. A 2009 law enforcement operation in Ecuador against drug trafficking was also linked to this group, and among the arrested were also Russian, Ecuadorean, and Spanish citizens.⁵
c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
F. Resources
a. Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
b. Human
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.
c. Logistical
i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found.

ii. Key routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
d. Transportation	
i. Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
ii. Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a noticeable trend in recruiting sailors, especially freight ship sailors, as couriers.⁶ The group might make use of both smaller ships and “mother ships,” the latter of which transports/transported cocaine, some of which was dissolved in barrels of molasses.⁷
iii. Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
iv. Intermodal container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipping containers have been used to conceal drug shipments (see Concealment below).
G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities	
a. Corruption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
b. Concealment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been use of courier mail services to send parcels of drugs from Colombia to Latvia.⁸ Shipping containers have been used to conceal drug shipments. On April 16, more than 200 kilos of high-quality cocaine with market value of some 14 million lats (EUR20 million) were seized from a ship container in the Riga port. The ship had arrived from South America and the container was supposed to be shipped to Russia. Two Latvians were arrested in connection with the drugs. This shipment was linked with events of 20 January 2010 in the Lithuanian port city of Klaipeda where police found 500 kilos of cocaine.⁹ Also in April 2010, Latvian authorities discovered 205.5 kilograms of cocaine hidden in a sea container containing timber and addressed to a company in Russia. The shipment was estimated to be worth perhaps as much as EUR15 million.¹⁰ Shipping containers of sports bags meant for Uzbekistan have also been discovered with cocaine hidden inside.¹¹ A company named Proatrica (Productos Agrícolas Triángulo S.A.) was found to be shipping hundreds of containers of molasses laced with coca. One seizure of 600 containers weighed some 16,852 kg and was destined for Barcelona, Spain. A search of further Proatrica warehouses located in San Carlos, Los Rios Province and the Bahamas found additional containers full of the molasses-cocaine mixture. In total, more than twenty tons were seized and Ecuadoran nationals Walter Diaz Chamba, Manuel Vasquez Murillo, and Miguel Perez Galaraza, Russian national Ruslan Chevchenko, and Latvian national Vladimir Nitrevich were arrested. The confiscation occurred after investigators spent five months tracking a group of Russian businessmen who arrived in Ecuador to export molasses.¹²
c. Deception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.
d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not found.

H. Prior / Existing Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian criminal organizations (exact organizations unknown) – cocaine trafficked from South America is sold to Russian criminals¹³ b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
K. Penchant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
L. Activities in United States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. c. Linkages with US groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Market/transaction links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. ii. Stable supplier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. iii. Franchise arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found. iv. HQ and Branch office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found.
M. Evaluations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to determine from available information. b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two international law enforcement operations have been executed in connection with this group (and possibly others) – Operation Melissa and Operation "Melaza coca" (or Molasses-Coca). Arrests have been made in each operation, and with further investigations ongoing, the group might be hindered or even incapacitated.¹⁴ c. Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Other Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

¹ "Latvians tend to get involved in drug trafficking from South America to Russia – police," *Baltic News Service, LexisNexis Academic*, 16 December 2010.

² "Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 13 May 09," *Andean -- OSC Summary*, May 13, 2009, OSC: LAP20090513028002.

³ “Latvians tend to get involved in drug trafficking from South America to Russia – police,” *Baltic News Service*; and “Latvian Police: Two Residents Detained in Case of Major Cocaine Shipment,” Riga *BNS*, April 23, 2010, OSC: EUP20100424200002.

⁴ “Thirty held, 7.1 tonnes of cocaine seized in EU-led operation,” Madrid *EFE*, March 15, 2010, OSC: EUP20100315950008.

⁵ “Lithuanians involved in cocaine smuggling ring busted in Latvia – police,” *Baltic News Service, LexisNexis Academic*, 21 April 2010.

⁶ “Latvians tend to get involved in drug trafficking from South America to Russia – police,” *Baltic News Service*.; and “Latvian Sailor Sentenced To Nine Years For Drug Trafficking,” Moscow *ITAR-TASS*, December 2, 2009, OSC: CEP20091202950197.

⁷ “Thirty held, 7.1 tonnes of cocaine seized in EU-led operation,” OSC: EUP20100315950008.

⁸ “Latvian Customs Discover Drugs in Parcels Mailed From South America, China,” Riga *BNS*, October 22, 2010, OSC: EUP20101022200012.

⁹ “Latvian Police: Two Residents Detained in Case of Major Cocaine Shipment,” OSC: EUP20100424200002.

¹⁰ “Lithuanians involved in cocaine smuggling ring busted in Latvia – police,” *Baltic News Service*.

¹¹ “Cocaine worth EUR 5.7 mln seized at Riga port,” *Baltic News Service, LexisNexis Academic*, December 22, 2010.

¹² “Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 25 Jun 09,” *Andean -- OSC Summary*, June 25, 2009, OSC:

LAP20090625041001.; “Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 13 May 09,” OSC: LAP20090513028002; and “Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 16-18 May 09,” *Andean -- OSC Summary*, May 16-18, 2009, OSC: LAP20090518028002.

¹³ “Latvians tend to get involved in drug trafficking from South America to Russia – police,” *Baltic News Service*.

¹⁴ “Thirty held, 7.1 tonnes of cocaine seized in EU-led operation,” OSC: EUP20100315950008; “Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 25 Jun 09,” OSC: LAP20090625041001; and “Highlights: Andean Crime and Narcotics Issues 13 May 09,” OSC: LAP20090513028002.