

The flow of commodities and logistics involving Latin American and Italian organized crime networks

1. Latin American Cartels (Colombian and Venezuelan)

- **Role:** Primary producers and exporters of cocaine, with growing involvement in synthetic drugs and human trafficking. Colombian cartels (e.g., Clan del Golfo) and Venezuelan state-linked groups (e.g., Cartel of the Suns) dominate supply to Europe.
- **Commodities Provided:**
 - **Cocaine:** Latin American cartels produce and ship massive quantities of cocaine to Europe. Colombia, the world's largest cocaine producer, exported an estimated 1,200 metric tons in 2021, per UNODC. Venezuelan groups, leveraging ports like La Guaira, facilitate transatlantic shipments, often through West Africa or Turkey.
 - **Synthetic Drugs:** Emerging production of fentanyl and methamphetamine in Colombia, though less relevant to European routes.
 - **Human Trafficking Victims:** Colombian and Venezuelan cartels traffic women and minors to Europe for prostitution or labor, often through Caribbean or Balkan routes.
- **Services Provided:**
 - **Production and Sourcing:** Operate coca plantations, labs, and export networks in Colombia and Venezuela.
 - **Transatlantic Logistics:** Coordinate shipments via container ships, submarines, or small vessels to ports in Spain, Italy, or Turkey. For example, a 2023 seizure of 2.7 metric tons of cocaine near the Canary Islands involved Venezuelan and Turkish operatives.
 - **Corruption:** Bribe officials in Latin American ports to ensure safe export, e.g., Venezuelan military officials in the Cartel of the Suns.
- **What They Receive:**
 - **Cash Payments:** Italian mafia groups pay millions for bulk cocaine shipments (e.g., €20,000–€30,000 per kg wholesale in Europe).
 - **Distribution Networks:** Italian mafia (e.g., 'Ndrangheta) and Balkan groups provide access to European retail markets, ensuring high profits (cocaine's value triples from Colombia to Europe).
 - **Logistical Support:** Turkish and Balkan networks offer transit routes (e.g., through Istanbul or Albanian ports) and safe houses for onward transport.
 - **Money Laundering:** Italian mafia groups, and occasionally Jewish Odesa figures (e.g., Mogilevich's networks), launder profits through European

businesses or offshore accounts.

- **Interactions:**

- **With Italian Mafia:** Direct partnerships, especially with 'Ndrangheta, which controls 80% of Europe's cocaine trade. Colombian cartels like Clan del Golfo ship directly to Italian ports like Gioia Tauro, managed by 'Ndrangheta.
- **With Turkish Networks:** Turkish mafia groups receive cocaine shipments via ports like Mersin, as seen in 2023 seizures, often coordinated with Venezuelan cartels. Turkish groups then supply Balkan networks.
- **With Balkan Networks:** Albanian groups, with maritime expertise, receive cocaine shipments in Montenegro or Albania, then distribute through the Balkans.
- **With Jewish Networks:** Limited interaction, but Odesa-based Jewish gangsters like Mogilevich may act as financial brokers, laundering Latin American drug profits through Ukraine or European banks.

2. Italian Mafia ('Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra, Camorra, Sacra Corona Unita)

- **Role:** Major distributors and financial facilitators in Europe, managing retail drug markets, human trafficking, and money laundering. The 'Ndrangheta is the dominant player, with global reach and direct ties to Latin American cartels.
- **Commodities Provided:**
 - **Cocaine and Heroin:** Italian mafia groups receive bulk cocaine from Latin America and heroin from Turkish suppliers (via Balkans), then distribute to European markets. For example, 'Ndrangheta sells cocaine at €50,000–€100,000 per kg retail.
 - **Human Trafficking Victims:** Camorra and Sacra Corona Unita exploit women from Latin America, Eastern Europe, or Africa in Italy's sex trade, often sourced through Balkan or Turkish routes.
 - **Arms:** Italian mafia groups supply firearms to local gangs or conflict zones, sometimes sourced from Balkan stockpiles (e.g., post-Yugoslav arms).
- **Services Provided:**
 - **Retail Distribution:** Manage street-level drug sales in Italy, Germany, and the UK through networks of local dealers and diaspora communities.
 - **Port Control:** 'Ndrangheta controls key ports like Gioia Tauro, facilitating cocaine imports from Latin America. Sacra Corona Unita manages Puglia's Adriatic ports, linking to Balkan routes.
 - **Money Laundering:** Use legitimate businesses (e.g., restaurants, construction firms) to clean drug profits. 'Ndrangheta laundered €50 billion annually in the 2010s, per Europol.
 - **Corruption:** Bribe Italian officials, port authorities, and law enforcement to protect operations.

- **What They Receive:**

- **Cocaine:** Bulk shipments from Colombian and Venezuelan cartels, delivered via container ships or Turkish ports.
- **Heroin:** Supplied by Turkish groups via Balkan routes, often through Albanian or Serbian intermediaries.
- **Transit Routes:** Balkan groups provide land routes (e.g., Serbia to Italy) for drugs and migrants.
- **Financial Expertise:** Jewish Odesa gangsters (e.g., Mogilevich's networks) may provide money laundering services, though this is secondary to Italian mafia's own capabilities.

- **Interactions:**

- **With Latin American Cartels:** 'Ndrangheta negotiates directly with Colombian cartels, sending emissaries to Bogotá or Caracas to secure deals. Cosa Nostra and Camorra rely on 'Ndrangheta for cocaine supply.
- **With Turkish Networks:** Italian mafia groups receive heroin from Turkish wholesalers, often through Balkan intermediaries. For example, a 2020 seizure in Genoa involved Turkish heroin shipped via Bulgaria.
- **With Balkan Networks:** Albanian and Serbian groups transport drugs and migrants to Italy, using Adriatic ports like Bari. Sacra Corona Unita collaborates closely with Albanian clans.
- **With Jewish Networks:** Limited but possible collaboration with Odesa Jewish gangsters for money laundering or drug distribution in Eastern Europe. For instance, Mogilevich's Budapest operations in the 1990s intersected with Italian mafia in Eastern European markets.

3. Turkish Organized Crime Groups (Contextual Role)

- **Role:** Transit hub for Latin American cocaine and Afghan heroin, coordinating with Italian and Balkan groups.

- **Commodities Provided:**

- **Heroin:** Sourced from Afghanistan via Iran, supplied to Italian mafia via Balkans.
- **Cocaine:** Increasingly received from Latin American cartels (e.g., Venezuelan Cartel of the Suns) through ports like Mersin, then passed to Balkan or Italian networks.

- **Services Provided:**

- **Port Access:** Turkish ports facilitate cocaine shipments from Latin America.
- **Logistics:** Coordinate transit to Balkans or directly to Italy.
- **Corruption:** Bribe officials to ensure safe passage.

- **What They Receive:**

- **Cocaine:** From Latin American cartels for onward distribution.

- **Cash and Laundering:** Italian mafia provides payments and laundering services through European networks.
- **Balkan Transit:** Albanian and Serbian groups move Turkish heroin to Italy.

4. Balkan Organized Crime Groups (Contextual Role)

- **Role:** Transit corridor for drugs, migrants, and arms between Turkey, Latin America, and Italy.
- **Commodities Provided:**
 - **Cannabis:** Albanian groups supply cannabis to Italian mafia.
 - **Cocaine and Heroin:** Transport Latin American cocaine and Turkish heroin to Italian ports or Central Europe.
 - **Migrants/Human Trafficking Victims:** Move migrants or victims through Serbia to Italy.
- **Services Provided:**
 - **Transportation:** Use trucks or boats to cross Balkan borders.
 - **Safe Houses:** Provide hideouts in Bosnia or Montenegro.
- **What They Receive:**
 - **Cocaine and Heroin:** From Latin American and Turkish sources.
 - **Distribution Access:** Italian mafia provides retail markets in Italy and Western Europe.

5. Jewish Organized Crime (Odesa-Based, Contextual Role)

- **Role:** Minor brokers or financial facilitators, primarily from Odesa's Jewish mafia (e.g., Semion Mogilevich).
- **Commodities Provided:**
 - **Drugs:** Distribute heroin or cocaine from Turkish or Latin American sources in Eastern Europe.
 - **Arms:** Smuggle post-Soviet weapons, potentially to Italian or Balkan buyers.
- **Services Provided:**
 - **Money Laundering:** Launder profits through Ukrainian or European schemes (e.g., Mogilevich's YBM Magnex).
 - **Brokerage:** Connect Latin American, Turkish, or Balkan groups with Eastern European markets.
- **What They Receive:**
 - **Commodities:** Cocaine from Latin American cartels via Turkey, heroin from Turkish groups.
 - **Transit Access:** Balkan routes for moving goods to Western Europe.
 - **Payments:** Cash from Italian mafia for laundering services.

Visualizing the Exchange Flow

The flow operates as a pipeline from Latin America to Europe, with Turkey and the Balkans as key transit points and Italy as a distribution hub:

1. **Latin America to Turkey:**
 - Colombian/Venezuelan cartels ship cocaine to Turkish ports (e.g., Mersin).
 - Turkish groups receive and forward to Balkans or Italy.
2. **Turkey to Balkans:**
 - Turkish groups supply heroin (from Afghanistan) and cocaine (from Latin America) to Albanian or Serbian groups.
 - Balkan groups transport through Serbia, Bosnia, or Montenegro.
3. **Balkans to Italy:**
 - Albanian groups ship drugs to Italian ports (e.g., Bari, Gioia Tauro) controlled by 'Ndrangheta or Sacra Corona Unita.
 - Italian mafia distributes to European markets.
4. **Jewish Role:**
 - Odesa Jewish gangsters broker deals or launder profits, primarily in Eastern Europe, with minor links to Italian or Balkan networks.
5. **Money Laundering:**
 - Italian mafia cleans profits through businesses, with Odesa networks assisting in Eastern Europe or offshore accounts.

Sustaining Operations

- **Profit Motive:** Cocaine's value increases from €5,000/kg in Colombia to €50,000–€100,000/kg in Europe, incentivizing cooperation.
- **Mutual Dependency:** Latin American cartels need Italian distribution, Turkish and Balkan groups need Latin American cocaine, and Jewish networks provide niche financial services.
- **Corruption:** Bribes in Latin America, Turkey, and Italy ensure smooth operations.
- **Adaptability:** Networks shift routes (e.g., from Turkey-Greece to Albania-Italy) to evade law enforcement.

Conclusion

The exchange flow between Latin American and Italian organized crime networks, with Turkish, Balkan, and minor Jewish involvement, is a profit-driven system. Latin American cartels supply cocaine and trafficking victims, Italian mafia groups manage distribution and laundering, Turkish networks provide heroin and transit, Balkan groups handle transportation, and Jewish Odesa figures offer niche financial services. Each actor provides and receives commodities or services—cocaine, heroin, logistics, laundering—to sustain operations, leveraging corruption and market demand. The flow is opportunistic, not conspiratorial, grounded in economic realities.