

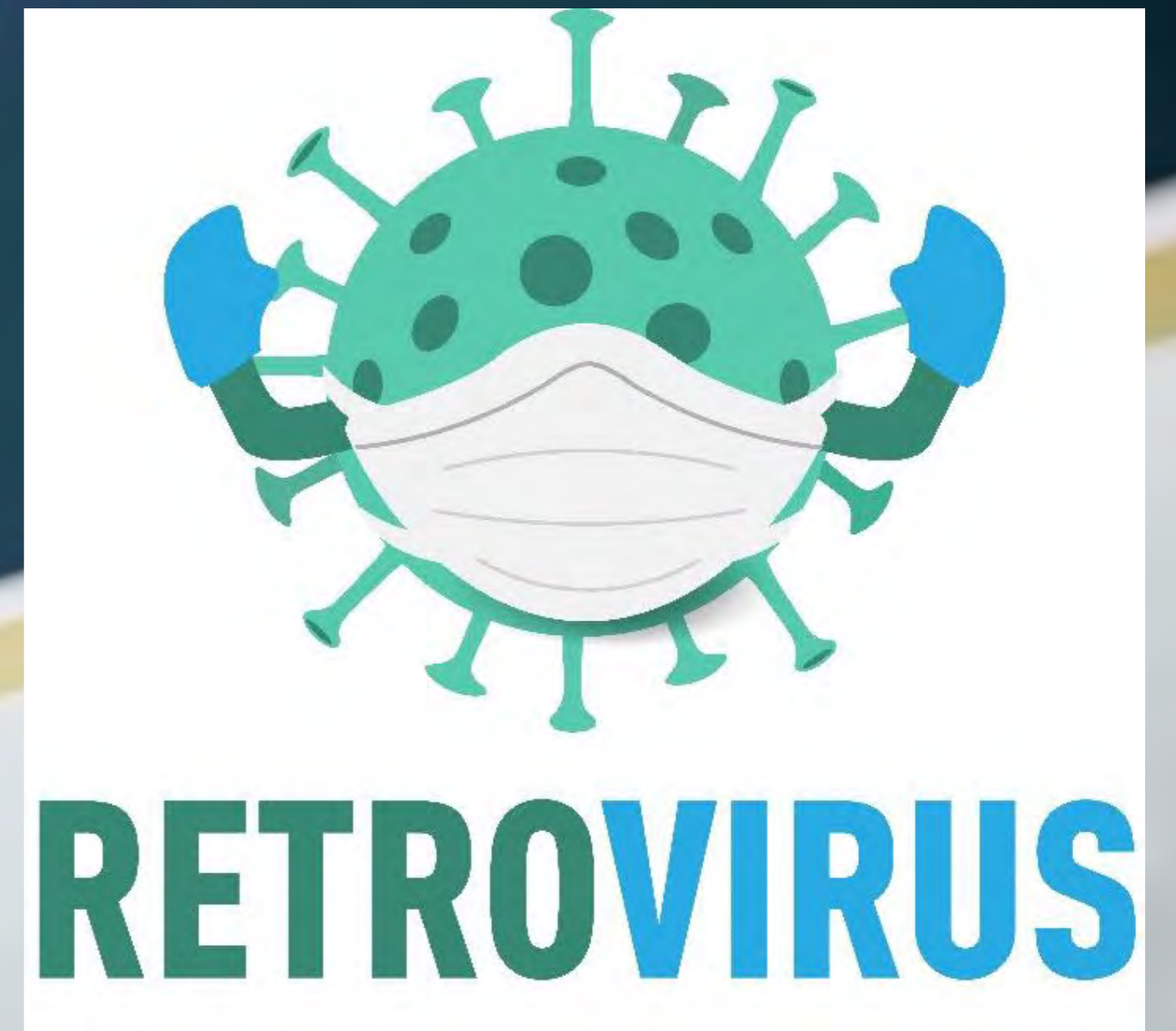
# Operation RETROVIRUS

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Mario PELLEGRINO  
AP EnviCrime

The Hague, 30/06/2020

EUROPOL



Europol Unclassified - Basic Protection Level

# OP RETROVIRUS - AGENDA

- Background
- Pre-operational and intelligence phase
- Operational phase
- Way ahead



# Section 1

## Background

Op. Retrovirus.

# OP RETROVIRUS - Background

## Europol Objectives:

*...” shall support and strengthen action by the competent authorities of the Member States and their mutual cooperation in preventing and combating serious crime affecting two or more Member States “...*

## Europol Tasks:

*collect, store, process, analyse and exchange information, including criminal intelligence;*

*notify the Member States (...) criminal offences concerning them;*

*coordinate, organise and implement investigative and operational actions to support and strengthen actions by the competent authorities of the Member State;*

*participate in joint investigation teams;*

*prepare threat assessments, strategic and operational analyses and general situation reports.*

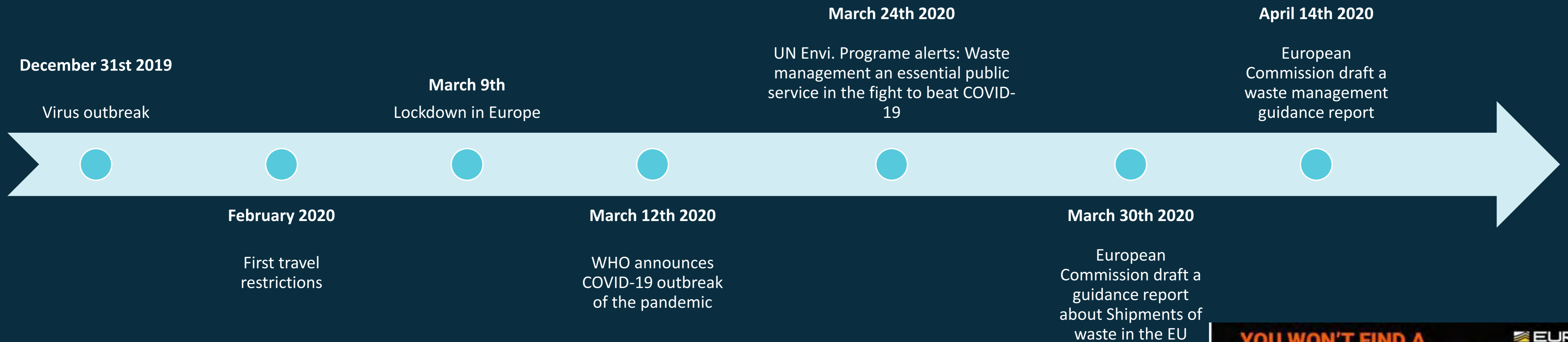
# OP RETROVIRUS - Background

AP EnviCrime creation



Europol Analysis Project  
(opening order  
Nov. 2017)

# OP RETROVIRUS – Background



- Once declared the sanitary emergency, EUROPOL identified several criminal threats, mainly concerning fraud.
- Public report: [www.europol.europa.eu](http://www.europol.europa.eu)
- AP EnviCrime identified a clear threat: sanitary waste



A photograph of the Europol building facade, featuring the word 'EUROPOL' in large, white, stylized letters. The building has a modern architectural style with a grid of windows. The image is overlaid with a dark blue diagonal shape on the left side.

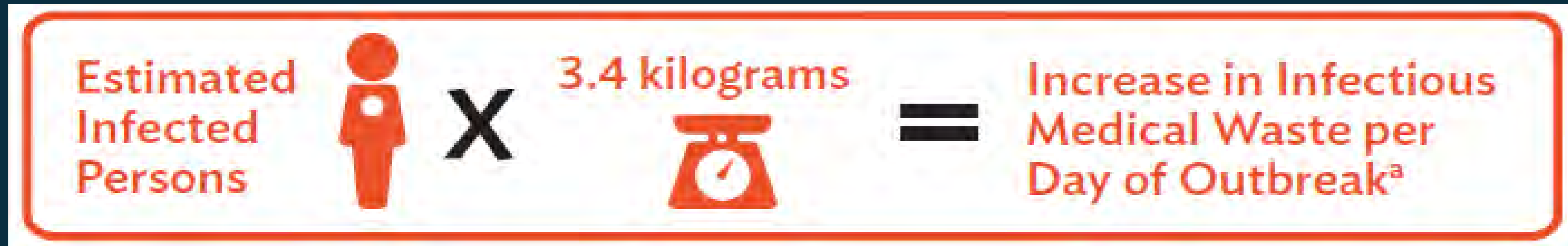
EUROPOL

## Section 2

# Pre-operational and intelligence phase

Op. Retrovirus

# OP RETROVIRUS – Pre-operational/Intelligence phase



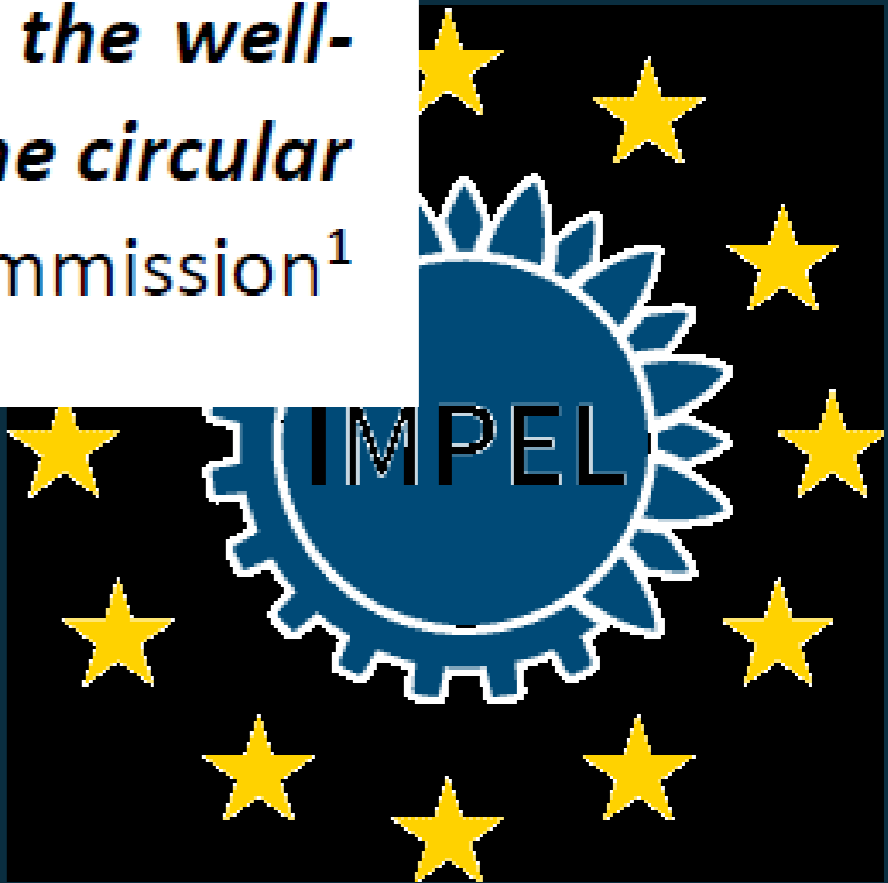
- Exchange of information with relevant Partners
- Concept note and Risk analysis behaviours document
- OSINT report

# OP RETROVIRUS – Intelligence phase



*“In this unprecedented crisis, we are working with the Member States and waste operators across the EU to address the challenge of ensuring a high level of protection of human health and the environment. Proper waste management is part of the essential services underpinning the well-being of our citizens delivered by numerous companies dealing with waste and keeping the circular economy going.”*

Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius – European Commission<sup>1</sup>



# OP RETROVIRUS - Timeline

- **Pre-operational phase: March 10<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>**
- **Intelligence phase: April 15<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>**
- **Operational phase: June 1<sup>st</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup>**
- **Post-operational phase: Q4 2020-Q1 2021**
- **Key concepts: Flexibility / National needs**



# OP RETROVIRUS - Participating countries



- |    |    |          |
|----|----|----------|
| AL | GE | PT       |
| AT | GR | RO       |
| BA | HR | SE       |
| BE | IT | SK       |
| BU | LT | SI       |
| CA | LU | UA       |
| CH | LV | CO       |
| CZ | MK | INTERPOL |
| DE | MT | FRONTEX  |
| ES | NL | EUROPOL  |
| FR | PL |          |

# OP RETROVIRUS - Intelligence phase

## Operation RETROVIRUS Risk analysis behaviours

FACT <sup>1</sup>	RISK
Individual waste such as gloves and facemasks accumulated in public areas (close to shopping areas and healthcare centres mainly).	Creation of infection / diseases spreading points in public areas
	Reselling used gloves and facemasks due to the high demand and lack of supply
	Individual collectors themselves as mobile vectors of the disease
Individual gloves and masks / other mixed with household waste, not separated in sealed bags <sup>2</sup>	Creation of infection / diseases spreading points
	Possibility for illegal individual collectors
Both previous facts	Waste disposal in rivers and seas
Individual waste included in recycling containers	Spreading of the disease into the recycling chain (facilities, machinery and eventually staff)
Lack of adequate containers for sanitary waste in producers' centres	Misdealing and deviating shipments to improper destinations (negligent / criminal behaviour) taking advantage of the inadequate container
Producer's / Management centres overloaded with sanitary waste	Criminals offering swift solutions for overload of sanitary waste to be disposed
	Criminals offering services to healthcare centres and dealers by presenting fake documentation
	Avoiding the proper procedure for transport and disposal of sanitary waste with eventual destination to illegal landfills, buried or burned
	Illegal transboundary shipments <sup>3</sup> (terrestrial / maritime)
	Criminals exploit the emergency situation corrupting public administrators or healthcare centres managers in order to obtain public tenders for managing the sanitary waste
Financial crimes related to sanitary waste <sup>4</sup>	Criminals overload invoices to public authorities due to the lack of inspections power during COVID19 emergency

# OP RETROVIRUS - Intelligence phase

## OSINT report:

- Objective to raise awareness
- Two different reports
- Coordination with Interpol



The Hague	29/04/2020
EDOC	1106034 v1
Department / Team	O24 – AP EnviCrime
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Sanitary waste and COVID 19 – OSINT report  
Operation RETROVIRUS

## Environmental consequences of COVID 19 OSINT report

### Establishing a picture

The COVID-19 crisis and the lockdown have consequences on environment. Some of them are temporary good, the global decrease of carbon emissions<sup>1 2</sup>, more honey in France<sup>3</sup> or cleaner water in Venice<sup>4 5</sup>.




# OP RETROVIRUS – Intelligence phase

## Individual Behaviours



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SHARE THIS ARTICLE Portugal's largest recycling centre has a problem. TEXT SIZE **Aa** **Aa**

[</>](#) Too many people are throwing coronavirus masks and gloves into recycling bins, posing a threat to the workers at Valor Sul in Lumiar.

[f](#) Since they're potentially contaminated, the masks and gloves have to be screened, often manually, amongst the 6,000 tons of recycling they process each month.

[t](#)

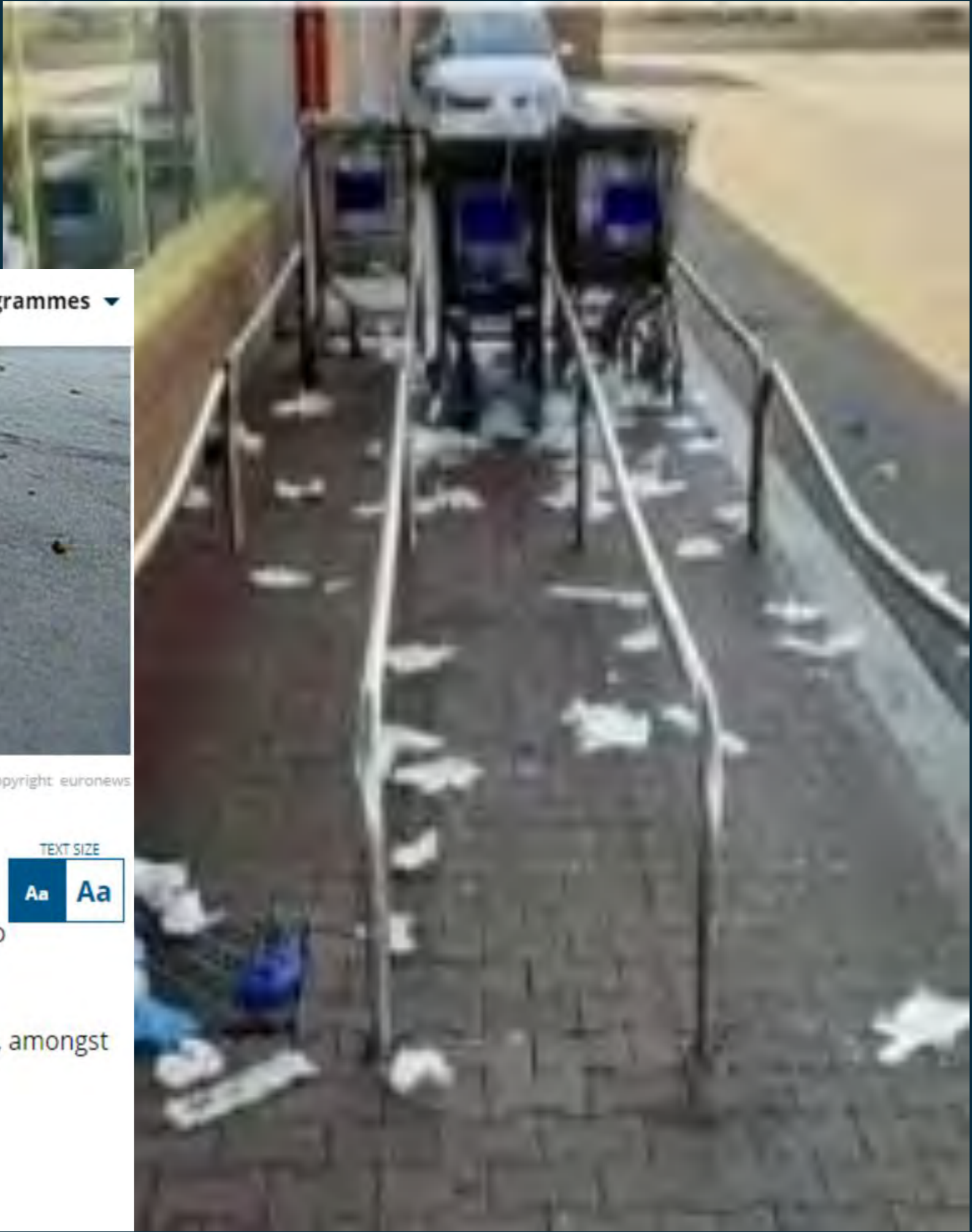
[P](#)

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Even worse, it's not actually possible to recycle gloves and masks.

euronews.



# OP RETROVIRUS – intelligence phase

## Waste management



THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS >

### From Madrid to France: the trash infected by the virus saturates the Community

The Government manages in 15 days of March the same bio-sanitary waste as in all of 2019, and sends some trucks abroad

Hospital waste dumped outside

Human tissue, dumped in wood

3.5 tonnes of hazardous and  
Mexico City

Published on Wednesday, May 20, 2020



MADRID

### They find numerous sanitary residues "possibly contaminated with coronaviruses" stored outdoors in Madrid

The local police in San Sebastián de los Reyes estimate that the waste, accumulated in a multitude of plastic containers, came from La Paz and the Ifema Hospital.



# OP RETROVIRUS – Intelligence phase

## OCGs' penetration inside the waste cycle



Source: La STAMPA Newspaper, 27 march 2020. "The mafia will also be among the protagonists of the economic recovery at the end of the pandemic. From North to South. **Giuseppe Pignatone** raised the alarm on "La Stampa". The former prosecutor of Reggio Calabria and Rome, now president of the Vatican City State Court, explained what the likely strategies of organized crime will be to exploit the economic crisis that will inevitably follow the health crisis. "The first direction - he writes - will be the expansion of the sectors that traditionally see the presence of the Mafia: the building and cement cycle, the cycle of waste, of large-scale counterfeiting. That is, all those low-tech sectors that are preferred by organized crime because they are easier to attack. Indeed, it is likely to believe that these are already objects of criminal organizations, in relation to the exceptional needs of the moment: **from the disposal of the huge quantities of hospital waste**, to the multiplication of road transport, to the return to Italy of productions that had become unprofitable".

A photograph of the Europol building facade, featuring the Europol logo and the word 'EUROPOL' in large, illuminated letters. The image is overlaid with a dark blue diagonal shape on the left side.

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# Section 3

## Operational phase

Op. Retrovirus

# OP. RETROVIRUS – Operational phase

## OPERATIONAL PLAN objectives

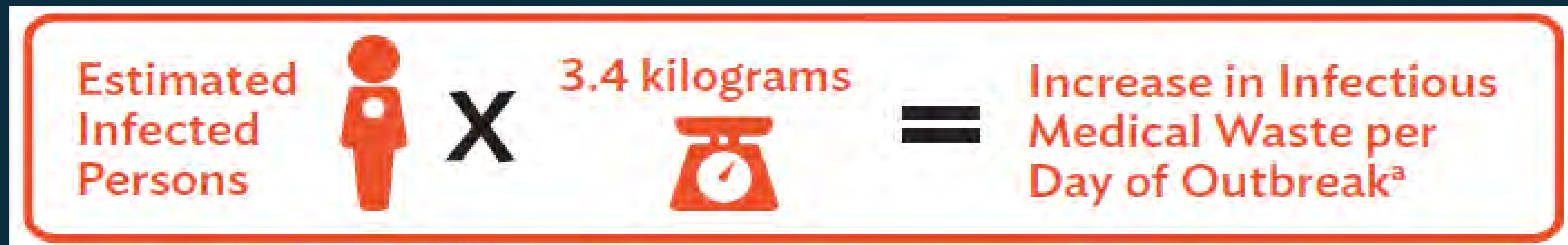
- RAISE awareness
- PREVENT the spread of the infections
- COMBAT the negligent gathering, transporting, management and eventual disposal of sanitary waste
- To arrange a COMMON APPROACH of LEAs towards the pandemic related crimes

# OP RETROVIRUS- Operational phase



Start of Operational phase  
June 2020

6.2 million people infected



# OP RETROVIRUS – Operational phase

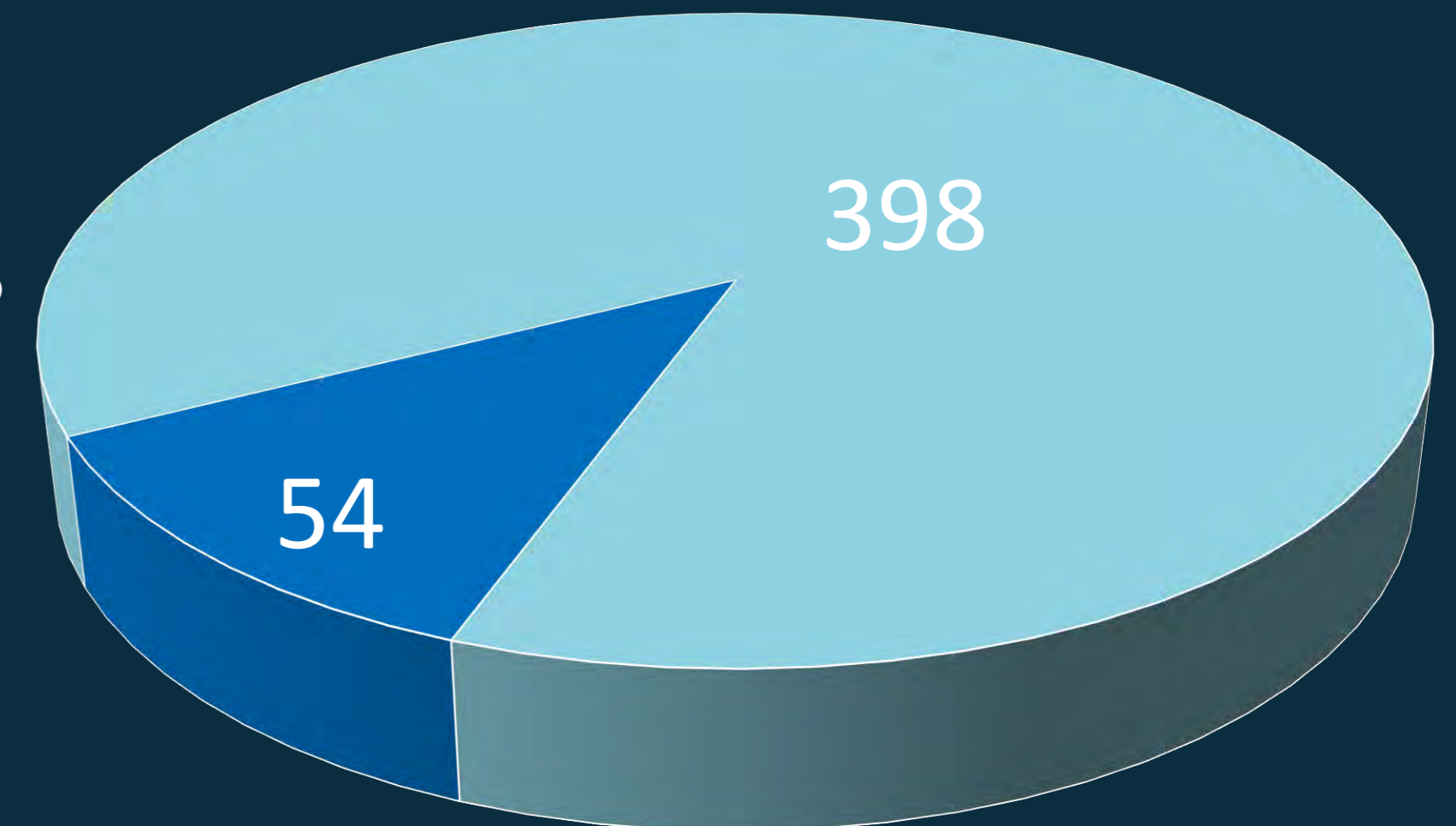
## Final results:

- 280.000 Inspections
- 819 administrative sanctions
- 22 seizures of waste
- 102 persons arrested



## SIENA messages

- Contributions
- Total



# OP RETROVIRUS – Operational phase

## Modus operandi identified:

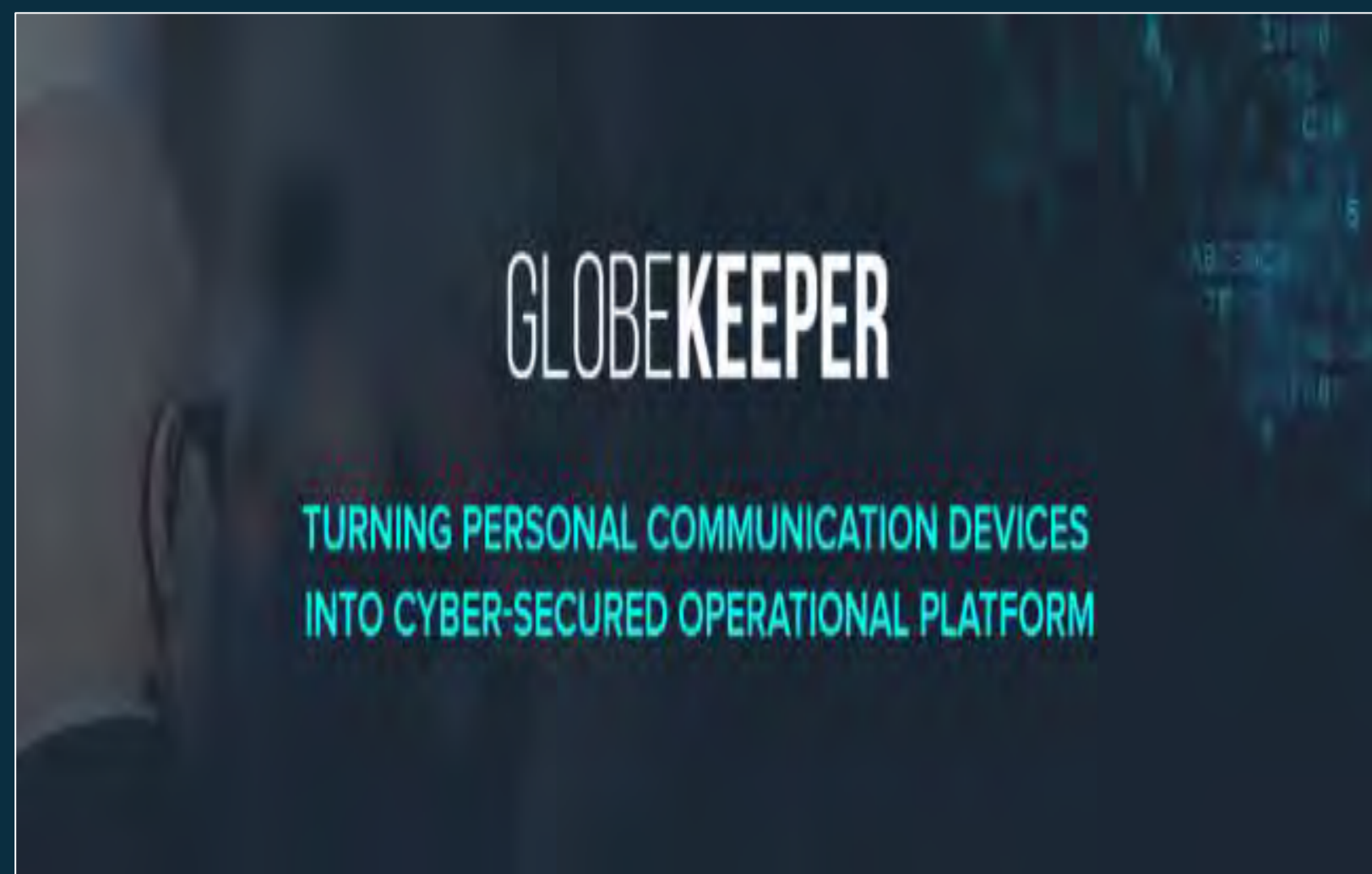
- Illicit storage
- Illegal transboundary movements
- Residual waters infected
- Illegal management



# OP. RETROVIRUS - EUROPOL Contribution

## TACTICAL

- Action Days
- Mobile Office
- UFED
- Globe Keeper



## OPERATIONAL

- Coordination
- Operational Analysis
- Operational meetings
- SIENA secure channel
- OSINT



## STRATEGIC

- Early warning notification
- Liase with Agencies and Networks
- Press Release

A photograph of the Europol building facade, featuring the word 'EUROPOL' in large, illuminated, white letters. The building is a modern, multi-story structure with a grid of windows. The image is overlaid with a dark teal diagonal shape on the left side.

# Section Way ahead

Op. Retrovirus

## OP. RETROVIRUS – Way ahead

Siena string will remain open:

- Share further seizures of sanitary waste
- Report upcoming investigations
- Contribute new modus operandi

**Thank you for your attention**  
Any questions?



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