

the guardian

'Ndrangheta mafia' made more last year than McDonald's and Deutsche Bank'

Study finds crime network made billions of euros from drug trafficking, illegal rubbish disposal and other activities

The 'Ndrangheta mafia from southern Italy made more money last year than Deutsche Bank and McDonald's put together with a turnover of €53bn (£44bn), a study has claimed.

The study by the **Demoskopika** research institute detailed the international crime syndicate's sources of revenue, including drug trafficking – which brought in an estimated €24.2bn – and illegal garbage disposal, which earned it €19.6bn.

The southern Italian mafia earned the equivalent of 3.5% of Italy's gross domestic product (GDP) last year, said the report based on analysis of documents from Italy's interior ministry and police, parliament's anti-mafia commission and the national anti-mafia task force. The 'Ndrangheta is thought to have about 400 key "operatives" in 30 countries, but its activities are believed to involve as many as 60,000 people worldwide, the report said. Extortion and usury last year brought in a substantial €2.9bn, while embezzlement earned the mafia €2.4bn and gambling €1.3bn.

Arms sales, prostitution, counterfeiting goods and people-smuggling were less lucrative, bringing in less than €1bn together. The 'Ndrangheta – whose name comes from the Greek for courage or loyalty – has a tight clan structure which has made it famously difficult to penetrate. With its network of hundreds of family gangs based around the southern region of Calabria, it is even more feared and secretive than the Sicilian mafia. Its roots go back to a criminal association specialised in gambling, the Garduna, which was created in the Spanish city of Toledo in 1412. It spread to Calabria, one of Italy's poorest regions, and started building up as a crime network based on kidnapping for ransom. +Pope Francis last week called on Italy's mafia groups to "stop doing evil" as he met relatives of their victims to demonstrate the Catholic church's opposition to organised crime. "There is still time to avoid ending up in hell, which is where you are going if you continue down this path," he warned mafiosi, telling them to relinquish their "blood-stained money" which "cannot be taken into paradise".