

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Organised crime networks targeted in huge law enforcement operation in Europe**

Law enforcement officers from 34 countries take part in the largest ever coordinated operation against organised crime in the EU

1027 individuals arrested

### **The Hague, the Netherlands**

Between 15 and 23 September, law enforcement authorities from 34 countries, coordinated and supported by Europol from its headquarters in The Hague, joined forces in Operation Archimedes. The operation targeted organised crime groups and their infrastructures across the European Union (EU) in a series of actions in hundreds of locations, with the cooperation of Eurojust, Frontex and Interpol.

“Operation Archimedes is a milestone in attempts by the law enforcement community to deliver concerted action against organised crime groups in Europe. The scale of the operation is unprecedented and the outcome, with over 1000 arrests made across Europe, a reminder to even the most serious criminal groups that the international law enforcement community is determined to combat their illegal activities,” says Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol. “This week, as EU police chiefs gather at Europol for the 2014 European Police Chiefs Convention, our focus will be on how our combined strengths can best be applied to bringing down even more of the organised criminal groups that threaten the safety and wellbeing of our society.”

Focussed on disrupting the activities of the most threatening criminal groups and top targets active in key crime hotspots across Europe, the intelligence-led Operation Archimedes saw the participation of law enforcement officers from all 28 EU Member States as well as Australia, Colombia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and the USA (ICE and CBP).

In the largest period of joint action days held so far in the EU, raids and other interventions took place between 15-23 September 2014 in hundreds of locations including airports, border-crossing points, ports and specific crime hot spots in towns and cities all of which had featured variously in Europol’s SOCTA,<sup>1</sup> criminal intelligence reports from EU Member States and third countries and analytical products drawn from Europol’s criminal databases.

Results from the operational actions include:

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## Europol Public Information

- 1027 individuals arrested
- 599 kg of cocaine and 200 kg of heroin seized
- 1.3 tonnes of cannabis seized
- 30 Romanian children saved from trafficking.

More details on the results from Operation Archimedes can be found on Europol's website<sup>4</sup> and in the attached infographic.

Joint action days have become a regular feature, over the years, of the EU law enforcement response to specific aspects of organised crime. Operation Archimedes builds on this experience. In one concerted set of actions, over an extended period the operation sought to harness the collective strength of police, customs and other enforcement agencies, supported by real-time, live intelligence exchange to focus on nine 'EMPACT'<sup>2</sup> priority crime areas, as part of the EU multi-annual policy cycle established by the Council of the European Union:

- Trafficking in human beings
- Synthetic drugs
- Firearms trafficking
- Excise and carousel (MTIC)<sup>3</sup> fraud
- Cybercrime (transnational child sex offenders and payment fraud).
- Facilitated illegal immigration
- Cocaine and heroin trafficking
- Counterfeit goods
- Organised property crime

In parallel, investigators targeted the key infrastructures used by criminal groups, the use of the Internet as a facilitator for crime, and the illicit movement of criminal proceeds using money transfer systems.

In cooperation with Frontex and EU Member States, around 10 000 irregular migrants were checked which also led to the arrest of criminals facilitating illegal immigration. In total in the overall operation, 170 facilitators were arrested and important intelligence was gathered.

Europol played a central role in coordinating and directing the overall operation from a 24/7 operational coordination centre in The Hague, manned by Europol officials, liaison officers from all involved countries and colleagues from international law enforcement partners.

Europol specialists, supported by their liaison officer colleagues, coordinated the exchange of information and intelligence between national law enforcement authorities, international partners and Europol, while Europol analysts processed the information and produced real-time reporting to those engaged in interventions and operational activity in the field.

Europol officers were also deployed on the spot in various locations, with their Europol mobile office which gave them direct, secure access to Europol's centralised databases and analysis tools.

While Operation Archimedes may be over it is clear that the huge operational activity will provide many leads which will, in turn, direct further investigations and arrests.

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## Further information

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- <sup>1</sup> EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2013.
- <sup>2</sup> European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).
- <sup>3</sup> Missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud is a form of sophisticated tax fraud carried out by criminals attacking the value added tax (VAT) regimes of EU Member States.
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/operation-archimedes>  
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