

Organised property crime is one of the **EMPACT** priorities, Europol's priority crime areas, under the 2018–2021 EU Policy Cycle.

A highly visible crime that causes widespread feelings of insecurity among citizens

Motor vehicle crime, domestic and business burglaries, pickpocketing and ATM attacks are some of the most common forms of organised property crime conducted by cross-border organised criminal groups.

A most visible form of crime, organised property crime has the potential to cause widespread feelings of insecurity, not least among vulnerable groups such as the elderly, who are often the targets of "dear nephew" and other "trick" thefts and pickpocketing.

Crimes in this category are often committed by highly **mobile organised crime groups** that, often exploiting diaspora communities in Member States to create networks of contacts, anchor points and logistical support, typically carry out a significant number of offences in a region over a short period before moving on.

As organised property crimes are often investigated in isolation at the local level, an analysis at the national level is often lacking, making these crimes harder to detect and, consequently, to solve. In many cases, incidents of property crime are still classified as petty criminality without recognising the organised crime aspect.

BURGLARY AND THEFT

Of major concern to EU law enforcement is the steady increase in reported burglaries in recent years. This increase particularly affects business premises, which are targeted much more frequently than before. Burglaries of business premises often involve intrusion into the property via the roof.

Estimates suggest one burglary is committed every 1.5 minutes in the EU, with some Member States registering 10000 burglaries every day.

Organised crime groups make use of various online services to facilitate their burglaries. This includes checking on social media platforms whether individuals are away from targeted residences, scouting targeted neighbourhoods using free online navigation tools and fencing goods via online marketplaces.

While many incidents of pickpocketing are not attributed to organised crime, the scale and level of organisation of pickpocketing raids across many Member States suggests that mobile organised crime groups are heavily involved.

ORGANISED ROBBERIES

As security measures have made it more difficult to rob banks and other cash-intensive businesses, commercial premises with less sophisticated security measures in place are increasingly the target of armed robberies by mobile organised crime groups.

Jewellery stores and other businesses selling highly valuable and compact goods also remain popular targets for armed robbers, who use various methods of attack, including smash and grab.

ATMs are another new target: attackers drill or burn small holes into the ATM case in order to reach the internal computer. By manipulating the ATM's operating system, they force it to dispense cash.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME

Vehicle theft remains a lucrative business for various organised crime groups. While the number of stolen vehicles appears to have stabilised in many Member States in recent years, the recovery of vehicles has dropped considerably across several Member States. This trend likely indicates a further shift from individual offenders to the involvement of more professional organised crime groups, some of which steal specific vehicles to order for clients based in destination countries.

The organised crime groups involved in vehicle theft increasingly rely on high-tech tools to gain access to vehicles and to overcome security measures. Information on how to overcome car security systems can be easily found on online messaging boards and websites and the necessary tools – originating in China in many cases – can be ordered online.

Some organised crime groups steal cars as part of burglaries and home-jacking attempts, while mobile organised crime groups target residential homes with high-value cars parked outside, breaking and entering these premises to retrieve the original car keys and steal the vehicle.

Most vehicle theft is intimately linked to **document fraud** as thieves use fraudulent documents to give stolen cars new identities for registration or exportation purposes.

Also related to this crime area, the trade in spare parts is increasingly taking place on online marketplaces. Organised crime groups have adapted accordingly and now rely on these platforms to sell cannibalised spare parts from stolen vehicles.

RESPONSE

The mandate of [Analysis Project \(AP\) Furtum](#) covers all aspects of property crime such as major burglaries, armed robberies (banks, jewellery, money transporters and depots), motor vehicle crimes, cargo crime, metal theft, organised pick pocketing.

In May 2017, Europol supported an international investigation, led by France and Bulgaria, that dismantled a criminal network involved in the [theft of catalytic converters in France](#). According to investigations, the total estimated losses were EUR 650 000. Catalytic converters are sought out for theft because they contain valuable metals such as platinum, palladium and rhodium. They are stolen from vehicles parked on the street as well as from recycling companies.

On May 2018 the Italian Central Directorate of Criminal Police, within the framework of EMPACT, with the support from Europol, CEPOL and the informal Network Against Metal Theft, created in 2014 within the Law Enforcement Working Party, led a [massive international action day against metal thefts](#). The operation took place in twelve EU Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom.

NUMBER OF ITEMS FOUND: 115

SEARCH



TYPE

Article/Story, Event, How-To Guide, Landing Page, Multimedia, News/Press Release, Operation, Page, Publication/Document

TARGET GROUP

SEARCH

CLEAR ALL

11
Oct
2013



HUGE JOINT INVESTIGATION OF BALTIC LUXURY CAR THEFTS

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

19
Jun
2013



HARD BLOW AGAINST RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MAFIA

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

31
May
2013



17 EU MEMBER STATES IN COORDINATED ACTION AGAINST METAL THIEVES

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

07
Jun
2012



NETWORK OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING CRIMINALS DISMANTLED IN FRANCE

18
Oct
2011



EUROPOL SUPPORTS FRENCH GENDARMERIE TO DISMANTLE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING ORGANISED CRIME GROUP

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

07
Jul
2011



EUROPOL AND IRELAND IDENTIFY ORGANISED CRIME GROUP ACTIVE IN ILLEGAL TRADING OF RHINO HORN

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

05
Apr
2011



LARGE INTERNATIONAL OPERATION AGAINST HIGHWAY CARGO THEFT NETWORKS

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

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