

18 ARRESTED AS POLICE ACROSS EUROPE SEIZE 350 FIREARMS

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[Press Release](#)



Following a complex investigation supported by Europol, the Dutch National Police (Politie) together with the Czech National Organised Crime Agency (Národní centrála proti organizovanému zločinu) and the Slovak National Crime Agency (Národná kriminálna agentúra) swooped on a gun trafficking gang, arresting 6 of its members this past month in the framework of Operational Taskforce LOS.

Two members of the criminal gang were arrested in Slovakia on 13 September, followed by the arrest on 5 October of 4 other members in the Netherlands (2) and the Czech Republic (2). All these suspects were considered as High-Value Targets by Europol.

The criminal syndicate under investigation specialised in the conversion of so-called Flobert guns into lethal live-firing ones. They are believed to have supplied over 1 500 firearms to criminal groups in the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

The investigation was initiated after 22 firearms were seized in February 2020 in Hoek van Holland, the Netherlands, in a transport vehicle on its way to the

United Kingdom. The weapons were all in a live-firing state.

In order to bring these gun traffickers to justice, an Operational Taskforce was established at Europol between the Netherlands, Slovakia, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Austria, Poland and the United Kingdom.

Since then, over 350 weapons sold by these criminals have been recovered, including submachine guns and assault rifles, alongside several thousand rounds of ammunition. Twelve other suspects have also already been arrested in the framework of this Taskforce for their involvement in this illegal-gun running operation.

The evidence seized during the course of the latest action day is now being analysed to identify further investigative leads across Europe. Europol deployed three of its own experts to the action day in the Czech Republic, while also funding the deployment of three Dutch investigators.

This action day was carried out in the framework of the [European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats](#) (EMPACT).



EMPACT

In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 - 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. This is achieved by improving and strengthening cooperation between the relevant services of EU Member States, institutions and agencies, as well as non-EU countries and organisations, including the private sector where relevant. The [trafficking in firearms](#) is one of the priorities of the Policy Cycle. From 2022, the mechanism becomes permanent under the name [EMPACT 2022+](#).

CRIME AREAS

[Illicit firearms trafficking](#)

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