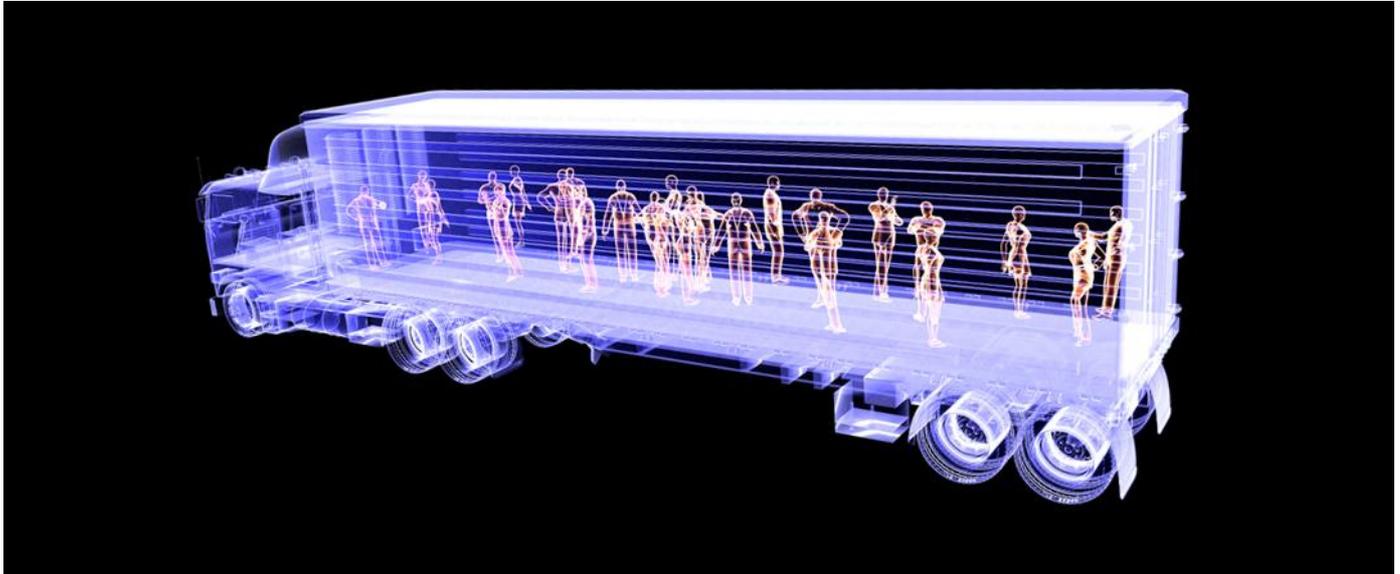


## 23 ARRESTS IN FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS AS IRAQI-KURDISH SMUGGLING NETWORK BUSTED

23 Jan 2020

[Press Release](#)

Around 10 000 migrants transported to the UK in refrigerated lorries



The French Border Guard together with the French National Police (Police nationale) and the Dutch Royal Marechaussee (Koninklijke Marechaussee), supported by Europol and Eurojust, dismantled a large criminal network involved in [migrant smuggling](#).

On the action day, law enforcement authorities arrested 23 suspected members of the criminal network (19 in France and 4 in the Netherlands), carried out five searches and seized firearms and vehicles. Irregular migrants discovered during the searches were brought to safety.

### UP TO €7 000 FOR A SPOT IN A REFRIGERATED LORRY

The criminal network is suspected of having facilitated the transportation of around 10 000 Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi-Kurdish and Syrian migrants from the French areas of Le Mans and Poitiers to the United Kingdom. The migrants were transported in life-threatening conditions, concealed in refrigerated – often-overcrowded – lorries (up to 20 migrants in a lorry). The migrants paid up to €7 000 for the dangerous journey. The payments were collected via an undercover hawala banking system run by a suspect established in the Netherlands. In total, the [criminal gang](#) is suspected to have gained around €70 million in profit from their illegal activities.

Europol supported this high-priority case by organising two operational meetings, facilitating the information exchange and providing tailored analytical support. On the action day, Europol deployed two experts on-the-spot, one in France and one in the Netherlands, to cross-check operational information in real-time. This case was also developed as part of EMPACT JOT Dunqett operational action.



In 2010 the European Union set up a four-year Policy Cycle to ensure greater continuity in the fight against serious international and organised crime. In March 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime for the 2018 - 2021 period. This multiannual Policy Cycle aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU in a coherent and methodological manner. 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. [Migrant smuggling](#) is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS

[Facilitation of Illegal Immigration](#)

TARGET GROUPS

[General Public](#) · [Law Enforcement](#) · [Academia](#) · [Professor](#) · [Students](#) · [Researcher](#) · [Press/Journalists](#) · [Other](#)

GENERAL TERMS

[EU Police Cycle \(EMPACT\)](#)

ENTITIES

[European Migrant Smuggling Centre \(EMSC\)](#)

SUPPORT &

[Operational support](#) · [Information exchange](#) · [Analysis](#) · [Operational](#) · [Mobile office](#)

SERVICES

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