

29 ARRESTS IN SPAIN AS RESULT OF JOINT OPERATION TARGETING TRAFFICKERS IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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[Press Release](#)

On 12-13 April the Spanish Guardia Civil and Chinese Police, in close cooperation with Europol, successfully dismantled a Chinese organised crime group which was actively trafficking to Spain Chinese women for sexual exploitation. The action days carried out in Madrid, Soria, Lleida, Girona, Valencia, Zaragoza and Toledo were further supported by representatives from the police forces of France and Andorra.

As a result of this joint operation, 22 locations were searched, 29 victims of trafficking safeguarded and 29 suspects arrested. Significant amounts of cash and valuable items were seized from the suspects, alongside mobile phones and money transfer documents.

Operationally supported on-the-spot by Europol experts, this operation was preceded by extensive and complex investigations initiated last year in Spain and coordinated by Europol.

In the framework of the parallel financial investigation, the Guardia Civil has seized assets and frozen bank accounts used for money laundering by this criminal network.

The suspects recruited a significant number of vulnerable Chinese women in their home country by luring them with the promise of well-paid jobs in the EU. The victims were subsequently trafficked to Spain directly or initially exploited in the sex-markets in Africa or in other European countries before being trafficked to Spain where the victims were then again sexually exploited in various locations, ranging from hotels to massage parlours and entertainment establishments.

These victims were subjected to adverse conditions, such as imposed debt bondage, withholding of the IDs, sexual and physical abuse and other restrictions of movement. The victims were also forced into obedience by the forced use medicines and drugs.

Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol, said: "Trafficking in human beings has for too long been perceived as a high-profit, low-risk activity. This perception has to change. This action sends a clear message that Europol and its partners are determined to pursue criminals who think they can exploit people for profit. Europol strongly supports EU Member States' investigations in this area, and we will continue our efforts in fighting this crime. But we also need to adapt our tools and strategies to

the globalisation of crime. Law enforcement cooperation beyond EU level must take on greater importance. By working together with countries such as China, and by promoting fast and effective international law enforcement cooperation, we can eradicate this form of modern slavery".

Investigations so far have shown the highly networked nature of this organised crime group, which encompassed recruiters, exploiters, facilitators, money launderers and individuals involved in the forgery of travel documents and visas.

Europol actively supported this human trafficking operation and provided operational and analytical support throughout the investigation. This included facilitating information exchange and analysis and delivering real-time cross checks of all data gathered in the course of the field action through the deployment to Spain of a Europol mobile office and two analysts to extract and analyse phone data.

CRIME AREAS [Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

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

GENERAL TERMS [Operation](#)

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