

42 ROLEX THIEVES WHO STOLE OVER €1 MILLION IN JEWELLERY ARRESTED IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA

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[Press Release](#)



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38 suspects were arrested in Spain, 3 in Romania and one in Portugal, including the ringleader of the criminal network. 66 luxury watches, including 25 Rolex watches, were seized, alongside a substantial amount of expensive jewellery and over €40 000 in cash. The estimated profits for the organised criminal group amounts to over €1 million.

Operating across Spain, the thieves targeted elderly people wearing Rolex watches or expensive jewellery using distraction techniques such as 'hug mugging': the thieves would act overly friendly towards their victims and use this close physical proximity to steal their watches and jewellery, often wrestling these off their victims before fleeing in a getaway car.

They are believed to have been very prolific: it is estimated that the network struck some 100 times last year in the Spanish province of Malaga alone.

This network was also extremely mobile. The thieves would typically stay 4 to 5 days in an area, residing in a house inland and moving every day within a radius of 100 kilometres of the house to commit thefts in nearby coastal towns before moving on to a new area.

The stolen watches and jewellery – or the money derived from their sale – would then be sent back to Romania into the pockets of those higher up the chain in the criminal organisation.

In view of the cross border nature of their crime, Eurojust coordinated the set-up of a Joint Investigation Team between the Spanish and Romanian authorities to allow for the swift gathering and sharing of evidence.

Europol organised a number of coordination meetings in The Hague during which information was shared and strategic decisions were taken. One of its experts was also sent to Spain on the action day to support the local authorities with the cross-checking of operational information.



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. Property crime is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS
TARGET GROUPS

Organised property crime
General Public · Law Enforcement · Academia · Professor · Students · Researcher · Press/Journalists · Other

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