

ARRESTED: SEVEN MEMBERS OF NETWORK SUSPECTED OF TRAFFICKING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE

12Oct2018

[Press Release](#)



The arrestees were members of an organised crime group dealing with forged passports and suspected of trafficking thousands of people. Various groups from the extensive network had already been dismantled in Albania last March. The migrants, looking for a better life in Canada, the United Kingdom or the USA, were recruited in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and paid between USD 20 000 and 25 000 in exchange for forged travel documents. Investigators from the Spanish National Police were able to identify and arrest 27 migrants in numerous Spanish airports travelling with forged documents from several European countries.

ACTION DAY IN SKOPJE

The action day took place on 4 October in different locations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On searching properties, police officers seized amounts of money: EUR 1 800, USD 14 500, CHF 4 400 and AUD 500, alongside two luxury vehicles, one firearm, cartridges, 14 mobile phones, four Australian passports, a copy of a Canadian passport and applications for Canadian visas, among other documents.

Operation Passport was carried out by the National Unit for Suppression of Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in collaboration with the U.S. Diplomatic Security Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and Homeland Security Investigations in the USA.

The European Migrant Smuggling Centre at Europol supported the case by organising the initial meeting with all the involved parties. During the investigation, information was cross-checked in the Europol database and shared with the involved partners to collect as much intelligence as possible. Europol coordinated the action taken in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia between police officers from several European countries such as Albania, Austria, Bulgaria and Spain. During the takedown, Europol was present in Skopje with forensic and operational support.

CRIME AREAS

[Facilitation of Illegal Immigration](#)

TARGET GROUPS

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

COUNTRIES

[North Macedonia](#)

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