

BIG HIT AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: CRIMINAL GROUP DISMANTLED IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA

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[Press Release](#)



Spanish National Police and the Romanian Police have joined forces, supported by Europol and Eurojust, to dismantle an organised crime group involved in trafficking women for sexual exploitation in different EU Member States. In total, 11 individuals were arrested and 13 victims were safeguarded.

The investigation began in November 2015. The members of the criminal network recruited their victims in their country of origin using the Loverboy method, by a man who purported to be the victim's boyfriend and promised her a better life. Once in Spain, the victims were forced into prostitution in Madrid, Ibiza and Asturias. During the course of the investigation, police officers unveiled that some of the victims were forced to undergo plastic surgery. Furthermore, the women had to pay a tax in return of being protected on the street. The organised group extended their activity to Germany, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands.

The money earned through the sexual exploitation of these women was sent back to Romania in cash or through parcel services, where the organised crime group subsequently laundered it by buying properties or high-end vehicles.

Police officers carried out five house searches in Madrid, one in Asturias and six in Romania. As a

result, two firearms, over EUR 10 000 in cash, and five vehicles were seized. In total, Operation Hunter resulted in the arrest of seven individuals in Spain and four in Romania. 13 Romanian victims were safeguarded.

Europol supported the investigation by facilitating the exchange of intelligence and analytical support, funding of an operational meeting and the deployment of an analyst to undertake on the spot checks during the action phase in Spain.

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