

## CORRUPTED FOOTBALL OFFICIALS CORNERED IN SPAIN

25 Feb 2020

[Press Release](#)

More than €10 million from ghost football player transfers laundered



Since 2018, the Spanish Civil Guard (Guardia Civil) has been investigating two football agents linked to one of the most relevant player representation agencies in Europe. They are suspected of money laundering and tax evasion. The operation, supported by Europol and in cooperation with the Spanish Tax Agency, led to five prosecutions. In the following weeks, several dozen will be called for court hearings.

### **€10 MILLION IN PROFIT FROM FAKE TRANSFERS OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS LAUNDERED IN LUXURY ASSETS IN SPAIN**

On 18 February 2020, several raids were carried out across Spain in properties linked to the suspects. The investigation uncovered that the prominent football agents were organising fictitious transfers of football players through a Cypriot football club to launder a large amount of money and evade taxes. The player transfers were only made on paper and with the sole purpose of evading taxes from the lucrative business and serve as a reason for the large money transfers. This undue profit was then turned into assets which the agents owned under a corporate name to conceal their identity. After the ghost transfers were made, the suspects were using a very sophisticated network of companies to acquire assets, while hiding their ownership. At least €10 million was put back into Spain through the purchasing of luxury assets including real estate and yachts. A Maltese "gatekeeper" tax adviser company was helping the agents and their criminal network in setting up the corporate veils to conceal the money flow and true owners of the assets.

The investigation uncovered that the football agents were part of a criminal network which manages football clubs in several countries, among which are Belgium, Cyprus and Serbia.

These ghost player transfers were first revealed through social media and the 2016 investigation on football leaks.

Europol facilitated the information exchange and coordinated the operational activities between involved national authorities. Europol's experts also provided analytical and specialist support throughout the investigation and on the spot during the action day.



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. [Money laundering](#) is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS  
TARGET GROUPS  
GENERAL TERMS

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