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# DRUGS WORTH NEARLY ONE BILLION DOLLARS SEIZED IN INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATION

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[Press Release](#)

The Hague, the Netherlands

Nearly 30 tonnes of cocaine, heroin and marijuana with an estimated value of USD 822 million have been seized in an operation targeting the maritime trafficking of drugs and illicit firearms by organised crime groups across Central America and the Caribbean. The international operation was led by Interpol and supported by Europol.

Operation Lionfish involved some 34 countries and territories\* and also resulted in 142 arrests, the seizure of 15 vessels, eight tonnes of chemical precursors, 42 guns and approximately USD 170 000 in cash.

Two operational coordination units, at Interpol's Regional Bureau in El Salvador and the Command Centre of the French West Indies Coastguard in Fort de France, Martinique, provided real-time support for information exchange and conducting checks against Interpol's global databases. Europol deployed its mobile office and a senior analyst to the command centre in Martinique, where hundreds of real-time and systematic cross checks were made against Europol's intelligence databases, supported by extensive operational analysis from Europol headquarters in The Hague.

Run in partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC) with support from the French Coastguard and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the joint law enforcement operation was also aimed at enhancing information sharing at regional and international levels, in order to improve intelligence on modus operandi, routes and the identification of organised crime structures and key players.

The operation was coordinated in response to growing evidence of the organised crime in the trafficking of drugs and firearms in the Central America and Caribbean regions due to its strategic location, with a significant increase in the number of cocaine seizures by local authorities, and a reported increase in violent crime.

\* The following countries and territories took part in Operation Lionfish: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Bermuda, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Cayman Islands,

Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Sint Maarten, Spain, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.

EUROPOL

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