
EUROPOL SUPPORTS FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO BRING DOWN PEOPLE TRAFFICKING NETWORK

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The Hague, the Netherlands

French law enforcement authorities, [1] with operational support from Europol, have arrested 11 people suspected of running a criminal network, trafficking and sexually exploiting around 100 young Romanian (Roma) women.

During a four-day operation at the end of May, law enforcement authorities apprehended the 11 suspects, who were also of Roma origin, and conducted a number of simultaneous house searches. In most cases the people traffickers were relatives of the exploited women, who were being sexually exploited through street prostitution in the Languedoc-Roussillon area of France.

The investigation, which started in 2011, found that the trafficking network had wide-spread contacts throughout Romania for sourcing and transporting the women to France. Parallel financial investigations revealed that most of the illegal profits generated by the criminal group were transferred back to Romania by 'cash couriers' and the remainder via Western Union money transfers.

Europol provided on-the-spot assistance by deploying a mobile office and two officers for the duration of the operation, and continue to support this investigation.

[1] French Gendarmerie in Montpellier and the Prosecution Office of Narbonne.

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