
EUROPOL SUPPORTS HUGE INTERNATIONAL OPERATION TO TACKLE ORGANISED CRIME

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[Press Release](#)

More than 500 suspects have been arrested in Operation Blue Amber, a series of international actions which were supported by Europol and took place in 260 locations across the world. Between 4 May and 24 June, law enforcement officers from the 28 EU countries and international partners¹ joined forces to take out organised crime groups and their infrastructures.

From the 24/7 Europol operational coordination centre, Europol's specialists, liaison officers and colleagues from international law enforcement partners such as SELEC, TISPOL and PCC-SEE, processed incoming criminal intelligence from the EU Member States and produced real-time reporting to those engaged in interventions and operational activity in the field.

While several locations were raided, other interventions took place in airports, border-crossing points, ports and specific crime hot spots in towns and cities².

Results from the operational actions include:

more than 500 suspected criminals arrested

2.8 tonnes of cocaine seized

390 vehicles confiscated

nearly 1300 tonnes of stolen metal seized.

Europol officers were also deployed on the spot in various locations, with mobile offices which gave them direct, secure access to Europol's centralised databases and analysis tools.

For example, 2.8 tonnes of cocaine and 110 kg of heroin were seized in actions against drugs trafficking. The known *modi operandi* of high-volume trafficking via containers, and low-volume trafficking via parcels and couriers, was again confirmed. These actions revealed that drugs couriers fly from South America to Europe with cocaine, and that parcels of heroin are sent from Afghanistan/Pakistan to Western Europe, on a daily basis. The concealment methods vary greatly, from hiding cocaine in clothes and shoe insoles, to caching heroin in medical instruments.

During the actions, thanks to the close cooperation with countries from the Western Balkans, several facilitators were arrested who were smuggling people to Europe. A 'safe house' for irregular migrants was also discovered in Hungary.

"Once again we have seen that successful international cooperation can have a major impact on organised crime. The outcome in this operation, with over 500 arrests made, is a reminder to criminals that they should not feel safe anywhere. Europol will continue to support national law enforcement agencies with its unique intelligence and technical capabilities," says Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol.

Operation Blue Amber focused on the 'EMPACT' priority crime areas³:

- Trafficking in human beings • Facilitated illegal immigration
- Synthetic drugs trafficking • Cocaine and heroin trafficking
- Firearms trafficking • Counterfeit goods
- Excise and carousel (MTIC)⁴ fraud • Organised property crime
- Cybercrime.

This series of actions follows the successful one-week Operation Archimedes organised last year, which led to the arrest of over 1 000 individuals and the seizure of nearly 2.7 tonnes of drugs.

The EU's Standing Committee on Internal Security (COSI) supported these actions, as they were performed within the framework of the EU priorities (EMPACT) on organised crime.

The actions were also supported by private airline companies.

For more details on the results from Operation Blue Amber:

[Watch the video](#)

Further information

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, United States, Canada, Iceland, Turkey, Nigeria, Abu Dhabi, Australia, Dubai, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Qatar, Thailand, Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala and Bolivia

The Police Community of the Americas (Ameripol), Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast

Europe Secretariat (PCC-SEE), Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), European Traffic Police Network (TISPOL), European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), Frontex, Interpol and Eurojust

2 All these locations had featured variously in Europol's SOCTA, criminal intelligence reports from EU Member States and third countries, and analytical products drawn from Europol's criminal databases

3 As proposed by the Standing Committee on Internal Security (COSI) of the EU and approved by the Council of EU

4 Missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud is a form of sophisticated tax fraud carried out by criminals attacking the value added tax (VAT) regimes of EU Member States



EN [Operation Blue Amber infographic](#) [1.85 MB]

CRIME AREAS [Trafficking in Human Beings](#) • [Drug Trafficking](#)
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GENERAL TERMS [EU Police Cycle \(EMPACT\)](#)
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