

INTERNATIONAL CREDIT CARD FRAUD SYNDICATE ACTIVE IN EUROPE AND ASIA DISRUPTED

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[Press Release](#)

A total of 105 suspects have been arrested as the result of a complex investigation run simultaneously in Europe and Asia with the support of Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3).

During the operation led against an organised criminal group (OCG) responsible for producing and using counterfeit credit cards for purchasing of high value goods, 29 arrests took place in Malaysia and 76 all over Europe.

During the final raid, the OCG's leaders were arrested among others and 2 illegal production sites of high-quality credit cards were dismantled. During house searches, 3 000 counterfeit payment cards were also seized, alongside fake passports, cameras, jewellery and substantial amounts of money in cash.

The investigation spanned from the end of 2015 to the spring of 2016 in Malaysia and 14 European countries^[1]. The OCG was established in Malaysia with its members committing payment fraud crimes all over the world. High quality counterfeit credit cards were manufactured in different locations and subsequently used by individuals to purchase high value goods, mainly at electronic stores and duty-free shops at airports, causing losses estimated at EUR 5 million. The production sites of credit cards were equipped with sophisticated equipment to ensure that counterfeits would not be recognised as such by merchants. At European airports, the OCG purchased mainly jewellery and expensive watches.

Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) assisted the investigation by providing analytical support, organising operational meetings in Europe and Asia as well as analysing the seized data/equipment. A key factor for the successful dismantling of this criminal organisation was close police cooperation on the global level and the direct support of American Express.

Wil van Gemert, Europol Deputy Director Operations, said: "The majority of the payment card fraud crimes have an international dimension, taking into account the origins of suspects, places where cards were obtained and illegal transactions made. Only through a coordinated approach at the global level between industry and law enforcement can we successfully track down the criminal networks behind such large-scale frauds and bring them to justice."

^[1] Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy,

Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom

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