

## 'LOVER BOYS' CASHING IN ON GIRLFRIENDS ARRESTED IN FRANCE

15 Oct 2020

[Press Release](#)

Suspects recruited their victims with the 'lover boy' method



The French Judicial Police within the French National Police (Police judiciaire, Police nationale) and the Romanian National Police (Poliția Română) supported by Europol and Eurojust, brought down an organised criminal group involved in human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

### TEN ARRESTED IN FRANCE AND ROMANIA

On the action day, 12 October 2020, law enforcement officers raided several locations in France and arrested ten individuals (four in France and six in Romania). So far, officers have identified three female victims with Romanian nationality in France. Among the seizures made during the raids were electronic equipment, documents and cash.

### FROM ROMANIA TO FRANCE VIA GERMANY

The organised crime group led by two Romanian nationals had been recruiting victims in Romania with the so-called 'lover boy' method since 2015. Some of the victims were in fact girlfriends of the suspects. The criminal group sent the women to Germany and then on to Paris, France, where they were sexually exploited. The suspects used websites to find clients while monitoring the activities of their victims by phone. The criminal profits were then channelled to Romania via money transfers and laundered through real estate and luxury items, such as cars.

### THE LOVER BOY TRICK

The 'lover boy' technique is widely used by criminals to recruit victims confronted with economic and social hardship. The suspects target their victims' vulnerabilities and seduce them with expensive gifts and promises of a better life abroad. This is how many women leave their families in search of love and new opportunities in other countries. However, once they find themselves in their new home, they are forced into prostitution to earn money for their handler. The victims are lured with affection, violence and threats against them and their families back home.

Europol facilitated the information exchange and provided analytical support. Operational activities were funded in the framework of EMPACT supported actions.

Eurojust facilitated the judicial cooperation, funded coordination meetings and set-up a Joint Investigation Team to coordinate the operational activities.



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 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 - 2021 period. In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 - 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. 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. Human trafficking is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS

[Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

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