
MORE THAN 140 DETAINED IN GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST AIRLINE FRAUD

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[Press Release](#)

An international law enforcement operation targeting airline fraudsters has resulted in the detention and investigation of 140 individuals found in possession of tickets bought using stolen or fake credit card details.

The two-day operation (15-16 June) was organised globally through coordination centres at Europol in The Hague, INTERPOL Singapore and Ameripol in Bogota, with support from Canadian and US law enforcement authorities. Over 74 airlines and 43 countries were involved in this year's action, which took place in over 130 airports across the world.

Individuals arrested during the operation were also found to be involved in other forms of crimes, including human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime and terrorism.

During the operation, 252 suspicious transactions were reported. As a result, 140 people were detained, denied boarding and questioned by police.

Representatives from airlines, online travel agencies and payment card companies based at Europol's command post worked together with experts from Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) to identify suspicious transactions and send confirmation to law enforcement officers deployed at the airports.

Payment card schemes, card issuers, Perseuss and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) supported the operation by providing information to confirm any suspicious fraudulent airline ticket transactions.

Further support was received on-the-day by Frontex which deployed officers to the command post at Europol and at a number of airports across Europe, while INTERPOL assisted with the rapid identification of wanted persons and stolen documents. A Eurojust official assisted at the coordination centre in The Hague.

This action is part of Europol's support to the security framework surrounding the 2016 UEFA European Championship. Special attention was paid to passengers travelling to the EURO 2016 football tournament with checks conducted both at airports in France and in countries of departure. A Europol mobile office was deployed to Paris throughout the action to facilitate the exchange of

critical data, allowing law enforcement in the field to quickly identify potential perpetrators.

Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol, said: "This successful initiative is yet another example of the importance of a coordinated response, involving law enforcement and industry, to identify and intercept criminals attempting to travel using tickets obtained fraudulently. This year's action falls during the EURO 2016 football tournament, one of the biggest sporting events of the year for which millions of fans will fly to France from across the world. Unfortunately, a festive event such as this also grabs the attention of cybercriminals who will be seeking opportunities to exploit it, targeting innocent consumers by stealing their credit card details and costing the airline industry significant amounts of money. With hundreds of thousands of airline bookings made online every day, it is only by such coordinated, targeted and intensive checks being carried out simultaneously that the potential fraudulent use of credit cards can be detected and the fraudsters arrested."

"This type of fraud not only targets innocent consumers by stealing their payment card details, but also poses significant risks to global security by allowing criminals and terrorists to travel under the radar. Only through coordinated interventions such as the Airport Action Days can we track down the organized criminal networks behind this large-scale fraud and detaining the criminals involved before they have the chance to commit other crimes," said INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock.

Meta Backman, Chair of the European Airline Fraud Prevention Group: "For 40 airlines and 6 online travel agencies in Europe alone to sign up for the operation it shows that the interest is there to do something about fraudulently purchased flight tickets instead of just cancelling bookings. Thanks to this operation arranged by Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) it is possible to act in a way airlines themselves could not. With all parties involved law enforcement, card schemes, card issuers and airlines this global operation serves as a good training ground for fraud fighting procedures."

"I cannot stress enough the importance of preventing and recovering fraud related losses for our members." said Aleks Popovich, IATA's Senior Vice President, Financial and Distribution Services. "The Global Action Days have become an important activity to tackle fraud against the airline industry and, since last year, as part of IATA's comprehensive Industry Fraud Prevention program. IATA has continued to increase its involvement in these activities by coordinating the energies of airlines all over the world, working in close cooperation with Europol, Ameripol, Interpol and other Law Enforcement Authorities. We are promoting fraud prevention services with trusted partners such as Perseuss and Ypsilon Net, with the goal of seeing the airline industry as a world leading industry sector for fraud prevention and the fight against organized crime".

This global operation against airline fraudsters is part of Operation CICONIA ALBA, the third EU-wide Joint Action Days taking place within the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime. The intelligence-led operational actions taking place in the framework of this operation cover several crime areas whilst focussing on key criminal hotspots and key criminal infrastructure in the EU and beyond.



CRIME AREAS	Trafficking in Human Beings • Drug Trafficking • Terrorism • Cybercrime
TARGET GROUPS	General Public • Law Enforcement • Academia • Professor • Students • Researcher • Press/Journalists • Other
GENERAL TERMS	Operation
ENTITIES	European Cybercrime Center (EC3)
OPERATIONS	Airline Action Days
ORGANISATIONS	Interpol

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