MOROCCAN-BASED DRUGS NETWORK DISMANTLED

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Press Release
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An international police operation supported by Europol and Eurojust has seen the dismantling of a major drug-smuggling network through 36 arrests and the seizure of over 1.5 tonnes of hashish.

The operation – led by Spain’s Guardia Civil, working with Europol, Eurojust, and French, Moroccan and Spanish law enforcement authorities – began last year when the Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie intercepted a boat laden with hashish and detained its crew. Moroccan authorities were able to confirm that the drugs were destined for Cadiz (Spain) where they were to be transported to another criminal organisation in France. It was then discovered that the traffickers were regularly trafficking hashish from Morocco to Spain, destined for onward distribution throughout Europe.

Searches carried out by law enforcement authorities in France, Morocco, Portugal and Spain also resulted in the seizure of more than EUR 32 000 in cash, over 200 mobile phones, 13 cars, one motorcycle, one boat, a bulletproof vest, a gun with ammunition, as well as cocaine and paraphernalia for weighing and portioning drugs.

The Moroccan head of the criminal network was killed in Cuerta (Spain) a few days ago as ‘accounts were settled’ between rival drug trafficking organisations. He was already known to Spanish law enforcement authorities for his previous criminal activities.

To support the operation, Europol and Eurojust hosted and funded operational meetings, and intelligence exchanged via Europol resulted in the identification of crucial links between the main targets in different countries. On the action days on 10 and 11 July 2013, Europol provided further support on-the-spot through the deployment of its mobile office.