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# NETWORK OF 280 BURGLARS DISRUPTED IN FRANCE

14 Jan 2014

[Press Release](#)

The Hague, the Netherlands

French law enforcement authorities,\* working with Europol, have dismantled a Paris-based network of prolific burglars and arrested 15 individuals. Two of those arrested – an Albanian and a Romanian – are suspected of being the criminal network ringleaders. Searches of houses and other premises were carried out and resulted in the discovery of EUR 59 000 in cash in a private room of a Parisian bar.

The lengthy investigation started in December 2012 following the arrest of an Albanian citizen who committed a burglary in Reims. Subsequent inquiries revealed a vast and sprawling network of criminals, mainly from Albania, who were recruited by the two main suspects to commit burglaries within a 200 km radius of Paris. The network, composed of around 280 young suspects, was divided into three-member burglary teams who were methodically dispatched in the evenings or at night to cities located close to motorway exits.

In recent months, around 30 young ‘foot-soldiers’ were arrested red-handed with stolen jewellery, electronics and cameras in the suburbs of Paris. Intelligence suggests that the receivers of the stolen goods may be Albanian-speaking owners of legal businesses residing in other European capitals.

The criminal group also cooperated with Romanian and Bulgarian associates who could quickly procure cars and fake documents, which prevented them from being detected. Investigators estimate that more than 150 second-hand or stolen cars were used within the mobile network.

Europol enabled cooperation between French, Belgian, Swedish and Italian law enforcement authorities, where perpetrators had already been sentenced for similar offences. Throughout the investigation, Europol facilitated the exchange of intelligence, organised operational meetings, and provided tailored analytical support to the investigators. On an action day on 18 November, Europol deployed a mobile office to France to provide on-the-spot intelligence analysis support. Investigators seized computers, laptops, mobile phones and electronic devices that were forensically analysed by a Europol specialist.

\* Gendarmerie of Reims (France) and the French Central Office for the Fight against Mobile Organised Crime Groups (OCLDI). OCLDI is the co-driver of the EU Multidisciplinary Action Plan

against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) priority, which aims to reduce the general capabilities of mobile (itinerant) organised crime groups.

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