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# PEOPLE SMUGGLING: EUROPOL AND POLISH BORDER GUARD DISMANTLE AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL NETWORK

03 Oct 2016

[Press Release](#)

With the support of Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), the Polish Border Guard has successfully dismantled an international criminal network involved in the smuggling of Ukrainian and Albanian nationals into the United Kingdom.

In the early hours of 27 September 2016, 11 suspects were arrested in Poland. During the house searches, communication devices, passports and Polish identity cards used by the criminal network were seized.

A Europol Mobile Investigation Team (EMIST) was deployed to Poland during the operation to support the operation with on-the-spot analysis.

Last year the Polish Border Guard started an investigation into an organised crime group involved in facilitating illegal immigration from Poland to the UK. The criminal group was composed of mainly Polish nationals living in Poland and the UK.

The Ukrainian and Albanian nationals came to Poland legally. There, under a "look alike" method, they received Polish identity cards with which they travelled to the UK. The Polish IDs were purchased or rented from Polish nationals.

The clients were paying the organised crime group up GBP 2 500 for the facilitation of their illegal immigration.

While waiting for the relevant documentation, the Ukrainian and Albanians nationals were accommodated in motels in Poland. After matching them to a proper document, they were transported to various airports in Poland or to other countries within the Schengen area from where they could fly to the UK.

The new owners of the documents underwent training on how to behave and how to answer questions in order not to be exposed. Some of the facilitators assisted them on the way to the destination country.

In the UK the documents were received and sent back to the crime group in Poland for the next clients.

Due to a global cooperation of border services and police from several countries, such as Hungary, the UK, Portugal, Malta, Croatia, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Spain it was established that this crime network had been active for over two years.

Europol supported the investigation by facilitating information exchange between the Member States involved and by providing operational support and analysis throughout the investigation.

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