

POLICE IN SPAIN SMASH SHAM MARRIAGE RING CHARGING MIGRANTS €20,000 FOR BOGUS NUPTIALS

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[Press Release](#)



The Spanish National Police (Policia Nacional) have arrested 12 suspected members of a sham marriage network which facilitated illegal immigration into the European Union by setting up partnerships of convenience between Indian and Pakistani migrants and Romanian nationals.

In an operation backed by Europol, the Spanish investigators carried out dozens of raids on multiple residential and business premises, seizing more than €10,000 in cash along with evidence that indicted those detained were involved in the facilitation of illegal immigration and document fraud.

The arrests took place in Barcelona (7), Mataró (2), Valencia (1), Hospitalet de Llobregat (1) and Sitges (1).

The criminal network orchestrated at least 50 such sham marriages in order for the illegal immigrants to obtain a residence permit, charging €20,000 per migrant for their services. The profits resulting from this criminal activity are estimated at €1 million.

The criminals would either approach migrants already residing illegally in the European Union, or arrange for them to be smuggled into Spain from outside the European continent. The criminals would then proceed to recruit women, mainly from Romania, to whom they offered substantial financial compensation for pretending to be the spouses of these non-EU citizens who were seeking to formalise their stay in the European Union.

The migrants who used the network's service would either stay in Spain or move to another EU country upon receiving a residence permit allowing for free movement within the Schengen area. The women involved in these fake marriages would typically return immediately to their home country.

Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) deployed one of its officers during the action day for on-the-spot support to the national investigators,

including real-time data exchange and cross-checks against Europol's databases.



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 March 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime for the 2018 - 2021 period. This multiannual Policy Cycle aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU in a coherent and methodological manner. 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. The [facilitation of illegal immigration](#) is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS

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