

## SHAM MARRIAGE NETWORK DISMANTLED IN DENMARK AND GERMANY

13 Jun 2018

[Press Release](#)

Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre and Eurojust assisted the German and Danish national authorities in detecting and dismantling an organised crime group (OCG) that used sham marriages with EU citizens to grant permanent residence permits to illegal migrants from Asia.



Today, judicial and law enforcement authorities from Denmark and Germany as well as Europol experts worked together to take down the key players of the organised crime group. The joint operation was the result of an 18-month coordinated investigation in the framework of a joint investigation team (JIT). The JIT, established with the support of Eurojust, provided the necessary mutual legal assistance and helped to simplify the cooperation between the national authorities considerably.

During the operation, which involved the execution of numerous houses searches in Germany and Denmark, the main structure and modus operandi of the OCG were identified and several OCG members were spotted in Hamburg.

The OCG helped non-EU nationals illegally enter, and stay in, the European Union by providing them with stolen and falsified identification documents, tourist visas that allow the holder to stay in the European Union for a maximum of 90 days, and even residence permits. However, their ultimate goal was to arrange sham marriages of EU citizens with these non-EU nationals in Denmark so they could then apply for and obtain permanent EU residence permits.

In some cases, the marriage ceremonies took place in Mexico or the USA. In some parts of these countries, marriage by proxy (where one or both partners are not present) is allowed and recognised, and a third party may deputise for the partners and sign the marriage certificate on their behalf.

The suspects ran several marriage bureaus and used agents to attract and recruit EU citizens willing to marry the smuggled non-EU nationals for remuneration, without having the obligation to live with their alleged partners.

The OCG, which has been active since 2015, is known to have smuggled approximately 1 200 migrants into the European Union, charging up to EUR 13 000 per person for its services. Its members are suspected of having committed the crimes of migrant smuggling, document forgery, incitement and assistance to bigamy, as well as bribery.

Europol supported the joint operation on the spot by performing cross-checks and real-time analysis of the information and telecommunication data provided by Member States' officers. Eurojust and Europol supported the investigation from its early stages by facilitating the exchange of intelligence between the involved Member States, providing tailored analyses to the investigators and organising coordination meetings.



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 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 - 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. 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. Facilitation of illegal immigration is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

CRIME AREAS

[Facilitation of Illegal Immigration](#)

TARGET GROUPS

[General Public](#) · [Law Enforcement](#) · [Academia](#) · [Professor](#) · [Students](#) · [Researcher](#) · [Press/Journalists](#) · [Other](#)

GENERAL TERMS

[EU Police Cycle \(EMPACT\)](#)

COUNTRIES

[Denmark](#) · [Germany](#)

ENTITIES

[European Migrant Smuggling Centre \(EMSC\)](#)

---

Source URL: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/sham-marriage-network-dismantled-in-denmark-and-germany>