

Italian archaeological trafficking group dismantled



Joint Eurojust-Europol press release

18 November 2019

An international police operation carried out today, supported by Eurojust and Europol, dismantled an international organised crime group involved in large-scale trafficking of Greek archaeological items looted from Calabria, Italy, resulting in 23 arrests and 103 searches and seizures, yielding approximately 10 000 archaeological goods.

The investigation, which began in 2017, revealed that illegal excavations were managed by a well-structured organised crime group (OCG) carrying out all phases of the trafficking. The OCG, led by two Calabrians living in the province of Crotona, included looters, fences, intermediaries and mules operating out of different Italian regions. The key facilitators from Italy, France, the UK, Germany and Serbia, were operating from Djion, Munich, London and Vršac, coordinating the supply chain. This looting, carried out over the course of several years, caused considerable damage to the Italian cultural heritage.

Eurojust supported the execution of the European Investigation Orders and arranged a coordination centre to follow the action in real time via dedicated and secure lines of communication. The coordination centre enabled the execution of measures, including arrests, searches and seizures, immediately and simultaneously in the five countries, and the timely exchange of information and coordination of all actors involved, including investigative judges, prosecutors and law enforcement authorities.

Europol supported the investigation by coordinating the information exchange, holding several operational meetings, preparing the action day and providing on-the-spot analytical support in Italy to cross-check operational information against Europol's databases.

National authorities:

- **IT:** Carabinieri
- **DE:** Bavarian State Police (Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (LKA))
- **FR:** Office central de lutte contre le trafic de biens culturels (OCBC)
- **UK:** Metropolitan Police, London
- **Serbia:** Serbian Criminal Investigations Directorate

See also: [Eurojust coordination centres](#)



Photos © Carabinieri, IT

Coming soon: 2019 EU Drug Markets Report from the EMCDDA and Europol

Drug trafficking is a highly profitable commercial activity and remains a core business for organised crime groups across Europe today. Understanding the reality of the European drug market requires a holistic approach, following the supply chain from production and trafficking to distribution and sales.

Taking such an approach, two EU agencies – the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and Europol – have joined forces to provide their third state-of-the art overview of the European illicit drug market in the [2019 EU Drug Markets Report](#).

To be launched in Brussels on **26 November**, this strategic and action-oriented analysis combines data from the EMCDDA's drug monitoring system with Europol's operational intelligence on organised crime.

The 250-page graphic-rich report (including an executive summary) is accompanied by 13 background papers addressing gaps identified in the 2016 edition.

A news release, with the main highlights, will be available in 24 languages, while graphics will be downloadable from an [online media library](#).

Press conference

Date: 26 November 2019

Time: 10.00 Central European Time (CET/Brussels); 09.00 (WET/Lisbon)

Venue: Résidence Palace, International Press Centre, 155 Rue de la Loi, B-1040 Brussels.

RSVP and embargoed copies: press@emcdda.europa.eu

The report and complementary materials will be available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/2019/drug-markets and www.europol.europa.eu.

Press contacts

- European Commission spokespersons' service – Tel. (32) 2 298 67 64 (Tove Ernst); Tel. (32) 2 296 34 44 (Katarzyna Kolanko)
- EMCDDA press office: press@emcdda.europa.eu – Tel. (351) 211 21 02 00/40
- Europol press office: press@europol.europa.eu – Tel. (31) 703 02 50 01

The *EU Drug Markets Report* is published every three years.

Rapid risk assessment – Sexual transmission of dengue in Spain



Spanish authorities have reported the likely sexual transmission of dengue between two men. This is the first case of dengue described in an area without the presence of vector mosquitoes that has been attributed to sexual transmission, and the first sexual transmission described between men who have sex with men (MSM).

Spanish authorities have reported the likely sexual transmission of dengue between two men. One of the men travelled to Cuba and the Dominican Republic (both countries where dengue is endemic) and returned to Spain on 4 September 2019. He developed symptoms of dengue on 5 September. In the days following his return, the man had unprotected sex with his partner, who had not travelled outside of Spain in the previous 45 days. His partner developed dengue symptoms on 15 September. According to the Spanish authorities, the comorbidities of both patients were assessed by clinicians responsible for their follow-up and were not considered EU relevant for the risk assessment.

Semen samples from both cases tested positive for dengue virus (DENV). Molecular investigations identified identical viral sequences between the two cases. Entomological investigations around the residence of the cases in the municipality of Madrid, Spain did not find any *Ae. albopictus* mosquitoes, a known vector for DENV.

In the absence of data supporting infection through other possible routes, it appears likely that the secondary case acquired DENV infection through sexual contact. This is the first case of dengue described in an area without the presence of vector mosquitoes that has been attributed to sexual transmission, and the first sexual transmission described between men who have sex with men (MSM). This mode of transmission is consistent with what has been observed for other flaviviruses such as Zika virus.

Despite the large numbers of imported cases, sexual transmission of DENV had not been previously reported in the EU/EEA.

Based on the current limited evidence, sexual transmission of dengue appears to be a rare route of transmission and the risk (both among MSM and heterosexuals), is considered extremely low. More research is needed to quantify the risk of sexual transmission and to identify risk factors. However, the risk of transmission by those returning from dengue-endemic areas with symptoms compatible with dengue infection, or with confirmed dengue infection, can be minimised by abstaining from sex or practicing safe sex using condoms until all symptoms are resolved.

Infectious disease clinicians should be informed that sexual transmission is a potential, but apparently rare mode of transmission for dengue and that they should: 1) consider it in patients with dengue in the absence of a compatible travel history; and 2) advise all patients with dengue on the potential risks of sexual transmission, and that those risks can be mitigated through abstinence from sexual contact, or practicing safe sex using condoms, during the course of their disease. This particularly applies if their partner is pregnant to prevent adverse pregnancy outcomes related to dengue infection during pregnancy.

[Press release – Celebrating 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)



The conference on Wednesday in Brussels will consider progress made over the past three decades and reflect on the challenges that children and youth face in the modern world.

Here is [the programme](#).

High-level guests

It will be opened by Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians and David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament. Spanish singer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador David Bisbal will also perform an opening song. Delegates will discuss children's right to live and thrive and their right to dream.

At 18:10 the same day, the exhibition "Human Rights, still some way to go?", presented by the network Cartooning for peace, will be opened by Parliament Vice-President Fabio Castaldo in the Mezzanine area, 2nd floor (Spaak building).

If you wish to attend the conference, you have to be registered. Adults can register [here](#) and minors can register through this [link](#).

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) strives to ensure better implementation of children's rights worldwide. It has inspired the EU and its member states to change laws, policies and practices aimed at protecting and promoting children's rights, irrespective of their nationality or residence status. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has become the [most widely](#) ratified human rights treaty in history.

Practical information for journalists

Journalists that already hold joint EU institutional accreditation will be able to access the event. For those not holding permanent media accreditation, requests to attend the conference [should be made here](#).

WHEN: Wednesday, 20 November, 14:30 – 18:30 CET.

WHERE: European Parliament's hemicycle in Brussels, Spaak building.

You can follow the high-level conference [live here](#).

[EU makes it easier for companies to restructure within the single market](#)

The EU is removing unjustified barriers to EU companies' freedom of establishment in the single market. Following an agreement with the European Parliament earlier this year, the Council today adopted a directive that facilitates EU companies' cross-border conversions, mergers and divisions.



These new rules enable EU companies to make the best out of the single market so that they remain competitive globally. At the same time, the directive provides for appropriate safeguards that discourage abuses and protect the legitimate interests of workers, minority shareholders and creditors.

Anna-Maja Henriksson, Finnish minister of justice

The new rules introduce comprehensive procedures for cross-border conversions and divisions and provide for additional rules on cross-border mergers of limited liability companies established in an EU member state. They also offer further simplifications that will apply to all three operations. These include the possibility of speeding up the procedure by waiving reports for members and employees in the event that shareholders agree, or if the company or any of its subsidiaries do not have any employees.

The directive sets out procedures to check the legality of cross-border operations against the relevant national legislation and introduces a mandatory anti-abuse control procedure. The procedure will allow national authorities to block a cross-border operation when it is carried out for abusive or fraudulent purposes, i.e. when it is designed to evade or circumvent national or EU law, or is intended for criminal purposes.

The agreed text provides for similar rules on employee participation rights in cross-border conversions, mergers and divisions. It also ensures that employees will be adequately informed and consulted about the expected impact of the operation. Minority and non-voting shareholders' rights will enjoy greater protection. At the same time, creditors of the company concerned are

granted clearer and more reliable safeguards.

Finally, the directive encourages the use of digital tools throughout the cross border operation. It will be possible to complete formalities such as the issuance of the pre-operation certificate, online. All relevant information will be exchanged through existing, digitally interconnected, business registers.

Next steps

The directive will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU. Member states will then have 36 months to adopt the measures necessary for its implementation.

Background

This directive is one of two proposals tabled by the Commission in April 2018 for the modernisation of EU company law. The other one, a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2017/1132 as regards the use of digital tools and processes in company law, was adopted in June 2019.

According to figures made available by the Commission, there are around 24 million companies in the EU, of which approximately 80% are limited liability companies. Around 98-99% of these limited liability companies are small and medium-sized enterprises. The latter will be the primary beneficiaries of the considerable savings generated through this directive.

[Visit the meeting page](#)