


Crackdown on THB and prostitution network



Joint Eurojust-Europol press release

13 November 2019

A simultaneous operation by the Lithuanian Police and the National Police of Spain was carried out yesterday. The operation was led by the respective judicial authorities in both countries, in close cooperation with Eurojust and Europol, and led to the arrest of two alleged organisers in Spain and 13 alleged criminal group members in Lithuania. At least 50 searches were carried out in both countries, yielding cash, narcotics, counterfeit documents, weapons and ammunition.

 A large-scale investigation spanning two years uncovered the activities of an organised criminal group (OCG), active in Lithuania. Organisers also operated out of Malaga, Spain. The OCG profited from the earnings of 118 female victims of enforced prostitution from Ukraine, Belarus and other countries working in Lithuania. Victims and competitors were subject to extreme violence by the OCG.

Eurojust and Europol supported this joint investigation by organising coordination and operational meetings. Eurojust strengthened the coordination and cooperation between the Lithuanian and Spanish national judicial authorities throughout the two-year investigation leading up to the simultaneous operation. Eurojust was in constant contact with the national authorities on the best way to proceed in the investigation, and coordinated and facilitated the execution of European Investigation Orders and European Arrest Warrants.

Europol provided analytical support since the early stage of the cooperation between Spain and Lithuania, supported the action day by deploying experts in fighting human trafficking to Lithuania to cross-check operational information in real time against Europol's databases and gave assistance in extracting data from seized devices. Europol activated a Virtual Command Post to support the action day.

[Link to Lithuanian Police video](#)

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Article – Parliament marks 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall



Parliament President David Sassoli and Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble paid tribute to the German citizens who gained independence when the wall fell in 1989, but warned of the danger of losing the hard-won values of freedom and democracy and called for EU unity and cooperation.

The wall that had divided East and West Berlin since 1961 helped reunite Europe when it fell on 9 November 1989, ushering in a new era for millions of Europeans. Sassoli warned that the principles on which European democracy are based are not irreversible. He said it must be defended from external pressures as well as internal threats, such as the revival of antisemitism, xenophobia, racism and nationalism.

“We must fight against these threats with determination and unity if we are to respect what happened that night in Berlin when that Wall came down,” he said. “I believe that this is a battle that we can only win if we stick together.”

Bundestag President Schäuble called the fall of the Berlin Wall and the removal of the Iron Curtain “unprecedented in history”.

"We need to remain aware of what is possible when people work together for something," he said. "Particularly in a parliament that serves political purposes but which must always fight for the common good and the wellbeing of all."

EU Agencies join 10-year anniversary of EU's Fundamental Rights Charter



EIGE, together with the other EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Agencies marks the 10-year anniversary of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. We pledge to continue to respect and promote fundamental rights and ensure our work always complies with the Charter. This includes upholding fundamental rights in our working practices and promoting gender equality and diversity at work.

The statement builds on a previous commitment by all EU agencies to strengthen [fundamental rights' protection](#) in their work and was released during the [2019 Conference on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#).

The nine agencies are the:

- European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA)
 - European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
 - European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)
 - European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
 - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
 - European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)
 - European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)
 - European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
 - European Union Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST)
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Albania: EIB and Albanian Development Fund prepare Northern Albania's regional investment programme



- Cooperation agreement between the bank of the European Union and the Albanian national development agency
- EUR 200,000 signed with ADF under the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), part of an approved EUR 3m technical assistance package
- Aim is to tap the growth potential of Northern Albania and the Adriatic

coastline with a focus on environmental issues and sustainable tourism development

The [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) and the [Albanian Development Fund](#) (ADF) have signed a EUR 200,000 cooperation agreement concerning technical assistance with the preparation of a regional investment programme in the North of Albania. This is the first step in a wider approved technical assistance programme worth up to EUR 3m to be implemented in partnership with ADF in support of the region. ADF is a national agency with 25 years' experience in local infrastructure investment throughout Albania. It is an important partner of the EIB and has significant expertise in translating national policies into investment programmes.

The technical assistance, financed by the EIB through the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), concerns an area encompassing the Adriatic coastline between Shengjin and Velipoje, the shores of Lake Shkodra, the River Buna and the Koplik gateway to the Albanian Alps, and includes parts of the territories of the municipalities of Shkodra, Lezha, and Malësi e Madhe.

As part of this cooperation, the EIB will assist ADF in defining the Coastline Gate of Alps integrated tourism and urban upgrading strategy, and in evaluating the area's natural assets and potential, as well as addressing environmental issues. This will enable the preparation of a mid and long-term capital investment plan that will complement the existing Master Plan of the Alps by improving accessibility, environmental quality and local amenities.

This partnership illustrates the EIB's support to the Albanian authorities for sustainable development that synthesises existing plans and sectors and prioritises strategic investments.

*"By helping devise a public infrastructure investment programme based upon the regional tourism potential and an in-depth analysis of existing infrastructure gaps the Bank will contribute to realising the untapped growth potential of northern Albania", said **Alessandro Bragonzi**, EIB representative for Albania, Kosovo*, and North Macedonia.*

*"ADF in its role as regional development agency through this initiative aims to provide a strategic vision for sustainable development of the gate of Alps area that synthesizes existing plans, sectorial strategies and prior or recent strategic investments. Albanian Development Fund sees in EIB an important partner from whom has received continuous support, since many years, in achieving its mission, in support to Albanian Government goals and objectives. Through this initiative, we intend to build a comprehensive programme of investments that will respond to territorial needs and potentials, through an integrated approach of interventions, improving the attractiveness of this area, boost economic generation potential, invest in people and services as well as improve public services", said **Dritan Agolli** ADF Executive Director.*

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Independence Declaration*

Notes to the editors

EIB in Albania and the Western Balkans

Since 2000, the European Investment Bank has lent more **than EUR 474m to Albania**, supporting transport and environmental infrastructure, health, education research and development and SMEs.

ADF

The Albanian Development Fund (ADF) is an agency established by a special law in 1993, as a social investment fund for poverty alleviation in the country. From an agency established with the mission to alleviate poverty in rural areas of Albania through small interventions after the fall of the communist regime, ADF transformed into the main lever of development. ADF applies regional approaches and implements integrated and complex projects ensuring sustainable social and economic development as well as creation of successful models and translate them into results with a long-term impact on citizens' welfare. In the recent years, the ADF has taken an increasingly significant role in regional development implementation reform.

Economic Resilience Initiative

Launched in 2016, ERI is part of the European Union's response to the challenges in the Southern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans, such as forced displacement and migration, economic downturns, political crises, droughts and flooding. ERI creates jobs and economic growth in the region by investing in key infrastructure and in private sector development. It may also help migration flows. ERI offers a package of loans and innovative financial products, while blending funds from the donor community with EIB financing. The initiative is implemented in close cooperation with EU countries, the European Commission and other partners. Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom were the first EU countries to contribute to ERI.

Under ERI, more than 50 projects have been approved for a total of EUR 4.92bn worth of investment. The initiative is expected to provide a total of EUR 6bn in extra financing.

Press release – Wolfgang Schäuble in plenary at 15:00 to commemorate fall of the Berlin Wall



The opening of the Brussels plenary session will be followed by a speech by the President of the German Parliament, Wolfgang Schäuble and political group speakers.

Before the speeches, there will be a musical performance by Liav Kerbel of the Musica Mundi School and historical footage of the fall of the Berlin Wall will be screened.

Watch the formal sitting on [EP Live](#) and [EbS+](#).