

DarkMarket: world's largest illegal dark web marketplace taken down



DarkMarket, the world's largest illegal marketplace on the dark web, has been taken offline in an international operation involving Germany, Australia, Denmark, Moldova, Ukraine, the United Kingdom (the National Crime Agency), and the USA (DEA, FBI, and IRS). Europol supported the takedown with specialist operational analysis and coordinated the cross-border collaborative effort of the countries involved.

DarkMarket in figures:

- almost **500 000** users;
- more than **2 400** sellers;
- over **320 000** transactions;
- more than **4 650** bitcoin and **12 800** monero transferred.

At the current rate, this corresponds to a sum of more than **€140 million**. The vendors on the marketplace mainly traded all kinds of drugs and sold counterfeit money, stolen or counterfeit credit card details, anonymous SIM cards and malware.

Germany takes the lead

The Central Criminal Investigation Department in the German city of Oldenburg arrested an Australian citizen who is the alleged operator of DarkMarket near the German-Danish border over the weekend. The investigation, which was led by the cybercrime unit of the Koblenz Public Prosecutor's Office, allowed officers to locate and close the marketplace, switch off the servers and seize the criminal infrastructure – more than 20 servers in Moldova and Ukraine supported by the German Federal Criminal Police office (BKA). The stored data will give investigators new leads to further investigate

moderators, sellers, and buyers.

Europol's involvement

- Facilitated international information exchange.
- Provided specialist operational support.
- Provided advanced analytics that assisted the German authorities in identifying and tracking down the alleged administrator.
- Supported Germany in coordinating the cross-border collaborative effort involving international partners.

Europol's Dark Web Team

One of Europol's initiatives is to create a coordinated law enforcement approach to tackle crime on the dark web. This involves law enforcement agencies from across and outside the EU and other relevant partners and organisations, such as Eurojust.

To achieve this goal, Europol's [European Cybercrime Centre \(EC3\)](#) has established a dedicated Dark Web Team to work together with EU partners and law enforcement across the globe to reduce the size of this underground illegal economy.

It will deliver a complete, coordinated approach:

- sharing information;
- providing operational support and expertise in different crime areas;
- developing tools, tactics and techniques to conduct dark web investigations;
- identifying threats and targets.

The team also aims to enhance joint technical and investigative actions, organise training and capacity-building initiatives, together with prevention and awareness-raising campaigns – a 360° strategy against criminality on the dark web.

A shared commitment across the law enforcement community worldwide and a coordinated approach by law enforcement agencies have once again proved their effectiveness. The scale of the operation at Europol demonstrates the global commitment to tackling the use of the dark web as a means to commit crime.

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, Europol supports the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime, and other serious and organized crime forms. Europol also works with many non-EU partner states and international organisations. From its various threat assessments to its intelligence-gathering and operational activities, Europol has the tools and resources it needs to do its part in making Europe safer.