

## Europol supports the French Gendarmerie in taking down Ivorian network behind scam in excess of €13 million



A year-long investigation led by the French National Gendarmerie (Gendarmerie Nationale – Section de Recherches d’Agen), under the authority of the investigating Magistrate at the Judicial court of Bergerac (Juge d’Instruction au Tribunal Judiciaire de Bergerac), with the support of Europol, has resulted in the dismantling of an organised crime group involved in large-scale financial fraud and money laundering across Europe.

A number of house searches were carried out in Paris on 23 June. A total of eight individuals – all of Ivorian origin or nationality – have been arrested as a result for their involvement in this scheme.

Usurping the name of existing French or foreign companies, the fraudsters would order goods of an important value with a payment delay of 30 days. Taking advantage of this delay, they would disappear with the goods and never honour the payment. Instead, the criminals would move the goods across Europe before handing them over to a Turkish criminal network in charge of their sale. The criminal proceeds were then laundered and reintegrated into the legal economy.

Over 80 companies – both in France and abroad, have been identified in the framework of the investigation carried out with the support of Europol. The total losses amount to at least €13 million.

Europol supported the action day in France by deploying two of its specialists to Paris. The evidence seized during the course of this action is

now being analysed to identify further investigative leads across Europe.