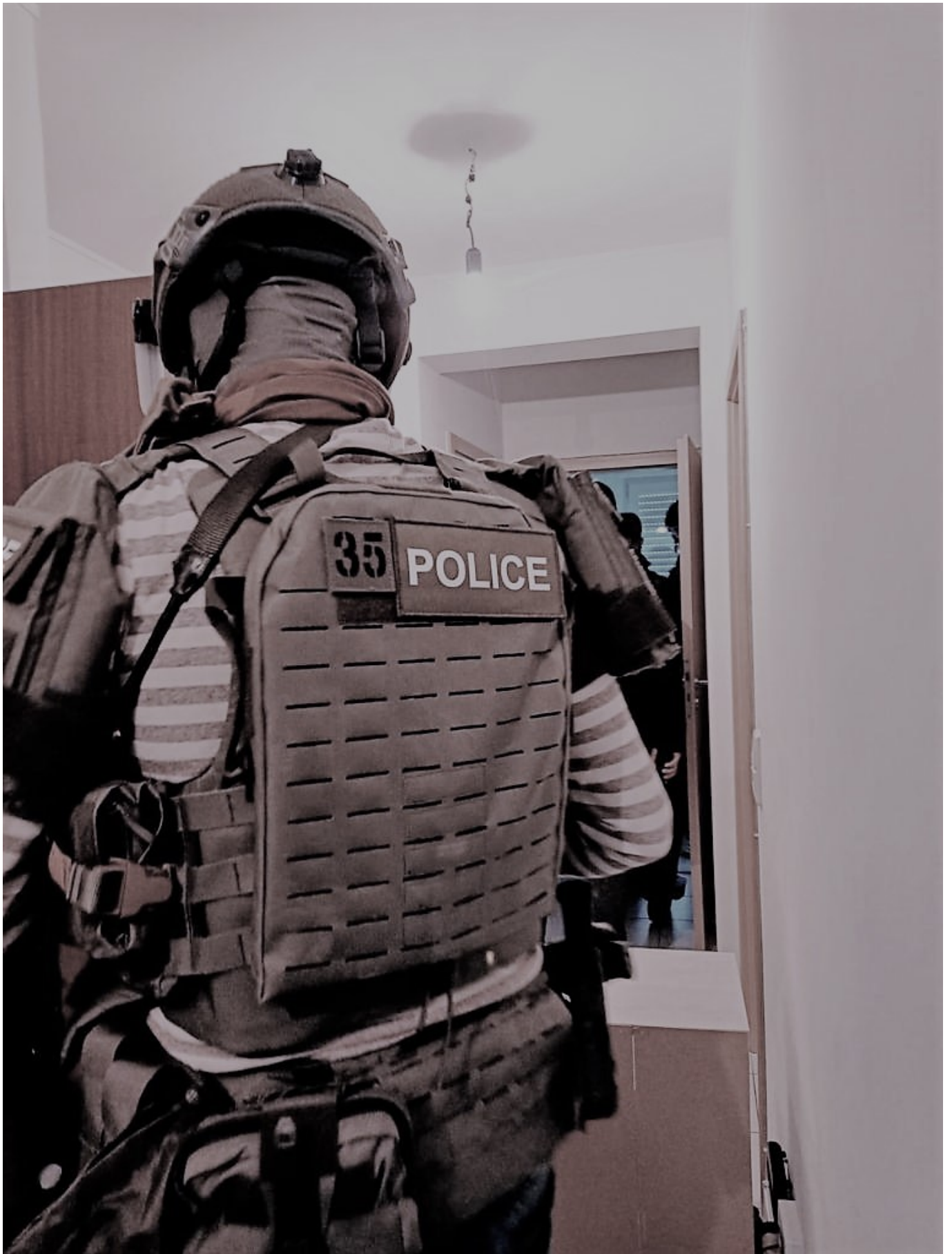


Follow the money: members of drug trafficking network arrested for money laundering in Germany and Luxembourg



At the request of France, authorities in Germany and Luxembourg carried out a coordinated blow on the network which was set up to launder proceeds from drug trafficking

At the request of Lille's Interregional Specialised Prosecution Service (JIRS) in France, law enforcement authorities in Germany and Luxembourg have arrested four members of a criminal group suspected of laundering the proceeds from drug trafficking. The crime group consisted of its leader, nicknamed "the Minister", as well as intermediaries and lorry drivers who were facilitating the trafficking of drugs and cash through various European countries.

The investigation began in France in 2017 after customs agents found €225 990 inside a lorry owned by a company registered in Luxembourg. A cocaine seizure made in France in 2019, and the ensuing information exchange, pointed authorities to the possible links between the two seizures. The financial investigations supported by Europol's European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) were key to the success of the case as they allowed authorities to draw clear links between drug trafficking and the money laundering activities of the group.

The operational action took place on 23 March and resulted in:

- Fourteen searches carried out in Germany and Luxembourg.
- Four members of the crime group including its leader, arrested on the basis of European arrest warrants issued by France.
- Four properties worth several million of euros and high-value vehicles seized.
- Several bank accounts frozen with a total value of 187 000 euros.
- 26 000 euros cash seized
- Fifty mobile phones and other devices seized for further examination.

Europol supported the operation by facilitating the information exchange, providing intelligence and analytical reports, and organising several operational meetings for investigators. Two experts from Europol's EFECC, equipped with a mobile office, supported the action day in Luxembourg. Eurojust assisted with the execution of European Investigation Orders and the freezing of the bank accounts.

The participating authorities:

- **France:** Judicial Customs Investigation Service (SEJF) and Anti-Drug Office (OFAST), under the coordination of the judiciary.
- **Germany:** PPOs in Stuttgart, Wiesbaden and Saarbrücken with the support of the Police Departments of Passau, Esslingen, Heidelberg and Westhessen and the State Criminal Police Office Saarland.
- **Luxembourg:** Police Grand-Ducal and the Customs and Excise Agency, under the supervision of the investigating judge of the Luxembourg District Court and the Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO).
- **Europol**
- **Eurojust**