

Half a million in fake euros seized in Romania



Counterfeit banknotes made by the criminal network circulated in at least 10 EU countries

Europol supported the Romania authorities to dismantle an organised crime group counterfeiting euros and Romanian lei. Law enforcement authorities from Austria, Belgium, Germany and Spain and the European Central Bank also assisted the investigation.

A clue discovered by the investigators led to the action day on 27 January 2021 as the network was planning to put counterfeit banknotes equivalent to €50 000 into circulation.

- 28 houses searched;
- 10 suspects arrested;
- 6 individuals under judicial controls;
- Almost €450 000 euros in counterfeit banknotes seized in denominations of €50, €100 and €500;
- Around 16 000 in genuine euros and lei seized;
- Cocaine and cannabis confiscated.

The criminal group, active for three years, was counterfeiting banknotes in denominations of €50, €100 and €500. These banknotes, produced on paper, were later found in several EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and Spain). The investigation uncovered that the counterfeiters had recently acquired the necessary technology to use polymers and fake Romanian lei. The criminal network adapted their methods and materials for the type of currency they were producing. Overall, 1 300 counterfeit banknotes were identified and withdrawn from circulation.

Europol facilitated the information exchange, the operational coordination and provided analytical support. During the action day, Europol supported

with technical expertise and deployed an expert on-site to cross-check operational information against Europol's databases and the systems of the European Central Bank.

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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.