


# Illegal sale of dangerous steroids in France halted, 24 arrests

□The Hague, 20 February 2020

**With the support of Eurojust, authorities in France, Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine have dismantled a criminal network, which sold large quantities of illegal and dangerous anabolic steroids, mainly on the French market. During an action day, 24 suspects have been arrested in Slovakia, including the leader of the criminal network. Thousands of pills and ampoules of anabolic were found in Poland and Ukraine and thousands of Euros in cash were also seized. The estimated profits for the organised criminal group (OCG) amounted to approximately 2 million Euro.** 

The OCG operated from Slovakia and was active in the wholesale import of anabolic steroids from China and other East Asian countries. The drugs were processed into pills and ready-to-use injections in Poland and offered online via websites which were managed from Slovakia. The illegal drugs were transported from Slovakia and Poland. Over the last months only, at least 9.300 kilos of steroids have been sold to customers, in particular in France, but in other countries as well.

Anabolic steroids are often used in amateur sports as well as in gyms and fitness centers to enhance performances and the creation of muscle mass, but pose serious health risks and can be lethal when overdosed. For this reason, the production and sale of these performance enhancing drugs are banned worldwide.

In view of the health risks and the illegality of the activities, investigations started in France in 2017. An investigating judge at the High Court in Paris opened a case at Eurojust towards France, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Ukraine. The arrested persons are of Slovak, Polish and Ukrainian origin. They are suspected of large-scale illicit drug trafficking and money laundering.

Eurojust supported a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) and organised three coordination meetings as of February last year. Further judicial support was given to the action day, which was held this week in Slovakia. Europol assisted in providing analytic support and information on assets of the criminal network.

The actions were initiated and supported by the Tribunal Judiciaire of Paris, the specialized OCLAESP health and environment unit of the French Gendarmerie Nationale, the Slovakian Regional Prosecutor's Office Žilina, the National Criminal Agency of Slovakia, the Silesian Remote Division of the Department for Organised Crime and Corruption of the National Public Prosecutor's Office in Katowice (Poland) and the Central Police Bureau of Investigation in Katowice, as well as the Prosecutor General's Office and Security Service of Ukraine.

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