

International drug trafficking network disrupted

✘ *Joint Eurojust/Europol press release*

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Today, in a joint operation, the German Public Prosecutor's Office (PP0) in Münster, the German Customs' Investigation Office, the Dutch Specialised Prosecution Office for Fraud and Environmental Crime in Zwolle and the Dutch Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Service (FIOD) dismantled an organised crime group (OCG) involved in international drug trafficking and money laundering.

The national investigations that culminated in the common action day were supported by Eurojust and Europol. A joint investigation team (JIT) was established in November 2018, which allowed the national authorities to quickly gather and safely exchange information and evidence. Eurojust provided financial support to the JIT and facilitated judicial and operational cooperation between the national authorities. Europol deployed a mobile office during the action and provided forensic support on the spot.

✘ The national investigations into the OCG were initiated in September 2018. The OCG was composed of 13 members, including some of Afghan and Dutch origin. The suspects in the Netherlands prepared parcels or envelopes with drugs, which were mailed to Germany. The perpetrators in Germany used various mailboxes and post offices to ship the packages on to recipients around the world. The orders were made online through the darknet, using cryptocurrency, such as bitcoin and paysafecards, given the anonymity it offers. Members of the OCG are also suspected of being involved in money laundering activities related to their profits.

Prior to today's action, amphetamines, MDMA, cocaine, heroin and ecstasy, with a total street value of more than € 400 000, were seized. Today, 10 private residences and business premises were searched at the German-Dutch border. Large amounts of drugs, including 40 kg of amphetamine and 1 kg of ecstasy pills, as well as mobile phones, computers, documents and € 10 000 in cash, were seized. Twelve suspects were arrested, 4 under European Arrest Warrants.

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