

Major action in Romania against thefts from moving trucks



The Hague, 10 March 2020

A major action has been taken against a mainly Romanian criminal network, which has been stealing high-grade goods such as laptops, televisions and mobile phones from driving lorries on motorways. Charges have been pressed against 71 suspects, under the direction of the Romanian authorities, with the support of their counterparts in Spain, France, Finland, Sweden and The Netherlands. Furthermore, 73 houses have been searched, with profits of the thefts amounting to approximately EUR 1.6 million. Eurojust actively supported the judicial cooperation and coordination in this case. Europol provided analytical support.

In 2016 and 2017, the organised criminal group (OCG) stole goods from at least nine driving trucks, with one failed attempt. The OCG moved in several vehicles and had one car driving in front of the targeted truck, keeping it at regular speed on a calm part of a motorway. Two cars drove next to the target, to prevent any other car from passing. Members of the criminal group from a fourth vehicle or van behind the truck jumped from the driving car onto the targeted lorry, using ropes or straps. They then opened the tarpaulin of the truck and loaded stolen goods into their own driving vehicle.

The drivers from the targeted trucks were not aware of the theft going on. The criminal network ensured no other persons could see the thefts, which took place in Romania, Spain and The Netherlands. In one case electronic equipment and state-of-the-art mobile phones were heisted from a truck during a ferry journey between Sweden and Finland, with the driver not on board of his cabin. In most cases the acquired goods were sold in Romania, although part of the equipment has been recovered.

Eurojust provided support to the setting up and functioning of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT), in which Romania, France, Finland, Sweden and The Netherlands participated and awarded financial funds. The Agency held two coordination meetings to prepare for the action, which has led to the arrests and searches.

In Romania, the action was conducted under the direction of the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism – Central Structure, with the support of the Romanian Police Service for Criminal Investigations (DGPMB). Further support was provided by the Central Unit of the Dutch National Police and other national authorities involved.

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