

Migrant smuggling and sham marriages

Eurojust/Europol joint press release

The Hague, 24 August 2018

On 22 August 2018, from a coordination centre at Eurojust, in the context of an investigation of the Public Prosecution Office Munich I, searches and arrests were synchronised in Romania and Poland against an organised crime group (OCG), involved in recruiting and trafficking men and women from India and Nepal into the European Union. The illegal immigrants participated in sham marriages in order to obtain residence permits. The Federal Police of Munich, cooperating with Europol and Eurojust, as well as with the Romanian and Polish national authorities, carried out 17 houses searches and executed five European arrest warrants.

Each migrant paid approximately EUR 12 000 to the smugglers for the full range of services, including the journey to Europe, entry to Germany, application for a residence permit, as well as the arrangement of the wedding ceremony.

During the action day, the national authorities of Germany, Romania and Poland, with the support of Eurojust and Europol, seized a significant amount of evidence, such as marriage certificates, business cards of wedding planners, unused wedding rings, electronic storage devices, and EUR 14 000 in cash. Europol, through its European Migrant Smuggling Centre, manned a mobile office to coordinate the police actions.

The investigations revealed so far at least 15 persons that had been smuggled for the purpose of entering into sham marriages. The total number of sham marriages conducted with the involvement of the OCG is allegedly much higher.

The investigations as well as the analysis of the secured evidence are ongoing.