

Money-laundering gang with links to South American cartels busted in Spain

Europol supported the Spanish Civil Guard (Guardia Civil) and the US Drug Enforcement Administration to dismantle an organised crime group laundering money for major South American cartels.

The criminal network was involved in debt collection and laundering of money coming from drug trafficking. They also provided so-called hitman services involving contract killings, threats and violence targeted at other criminal groups. The criminal organisation used the network of hitmen to collect payments across Spain from other criminal groups buying drugs from the South American cartels to redistribute them locally. The investigation identified also a number of 'front men' acquiring luxurious goods for the lifestyles of the group's leaders. This was only a small part of a large money-laundering scheme that traded high-end cars and used smurfing techniques to place criminal profits into the financial system.

Results

- 4 suspects arrested (Colombian, Spanish and Venezuelan nationals)
- 7 suspects charged with criminal offences
- 1 company charged with a criminal offence
- 3 home searches in Spain
- Seizures of high-end cars, luxury items, firearms and ammunition

Europol facilitated the information exchange and provided analytical support during the whole investigation.

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Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, we support the 27 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. We also work 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.



In 2010 the European Union set up a [four-year Policy Cycle](#) to ensure greater continuity in the fight against serious international and organised crime. In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 – 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. This is achieved by improving and strengthening cooperation between the relevant services of EU Member States, institutions and agencies, as well as non-EU countries and organisations, including the private sector where relevant. [Money laundering](#) is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.