

# Social benefit fraud ring dismantled

The Hague, 4 July 2018

□Yesterday, operations were carried out simultaneously in Romania and Germany in a joint action day, involving arrests (including execution of four German European Arrest Warrants), searches (16 in Germany and 11 in Romania), hearings and freezing orders.

The crime worked in the following way: In the period between 2013 and 2017, a Romanian organised crime group (OCG) from the Braşov region recruited and trafficked more than 50 Romanian families to Dortmund, Germany, with the promise of employment. The families were then housed by the OCG and bogus employment documents were drawn up for some of the family members, who were compelled to sign documents in German without understanding the contents. The jobs, which never existed, were officially terminated, and the OCG compelled the families to open bank accounts and apply for social benefits, including child allowances. The OCG confiscated the money deposited by the German authorities, laundered it, and sent it to Romania by car or wire transfer. The amount is estimated in the millions of euro.

Parallel investigations were initiated by Directorate for Organized Crime and Terrorism Braşov Territorial Office and the Public Prosecutor's Office Dortmund. The authorities of both countries signed a joint investigation team (JIT) agreement in December 2017, and combined their investigations. Eurojust held two coordination meetings in The Hague, and funded the JIT.

Members of the JIT were present in both countries, with German JIT members in Romania and Romanian JIT members in Germany, to assist in searches and hearings.

Europol's Analysis Project Phoenix was involved, and assisted the investigations in both countries with analysis of suspects, telephone numbers and bank data.

## ***Background materials:***

[Eurojust support to JITs](#)