

# Spanish Police seize first ever narco-submarine made in Europe



The seizure was made in the framework of Operation FERRO, a high-level law enforcement operation against an organised crime group involved in large-scale drugs trafficking.

Over 300 police officers carried out this operation in Spain, supported by the National Police of Colombia (Policía Nacional de Colombia), the Dutch National Police (Politie), the Portuguese Judicial Police (Policía Judiciária), the U.K. National Crime Agency and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, with international activity coordinated by Europol.

## **Results of Operation FERRO**

- 47 house searches carried out in the Spanish cities of Tarragona (6), Barcelona (11), Gerona (3), Málaga (11), Castellón (4), Valencia (2), Murcia (7), Cádiz (1), Granada (1) and Badajoz (1);
- 52 individuals arrested;
- 2 boats seized: one semi-submersible vessel in Málaga and one speedboat worth over €300 000 in the province of Murcia;
- Over 3 tonnes of cocaine seized, alongside 700 kilos of hashish and over €100 000 in cash.

## **Operation FERRO was carried out in several phases**

**Phase one:** Investigators identified an organised crime group, composed of Spanish, Colombian and Dominican nationals, involved in large-scale

trafficking of cocaine, hashish and marijuana. The criminals were operating from Spain, specifically Cataluña. Between April to December 2020, a number of important cocaine seizures linked to this criminal group were made in Colombia. A total of 2 900 kilos of cocaine were seized.

**Phase two:** In November 2020, police officers in Spain arrested the leader of this criminal network in Tarragona, alongside 13 of his accomplices.

**Phase three:** In February of this year, another branch of this organised crime group was targeted. Four individuals were arrested in Tarragona and a shipment of 583 kilos of hashish on its way to France and Italy seized. House searches were also carried out in Málaga, on the occasion of which the half-submersible vessel was found in a warehouse. The boat – the first ever of its kind seized on European soil, was still in construction when it was found. The craft was 9 meters long and could have been able to transport up to 2 tonnes of drugs.

**Phase four:** One of the main targets was arrested in February at the El Prat airport in Barcelona as he was trying to flee to the Netherlands. As a result of this arrest, a warehouse was searched Barcelona which led to the seizure of 300 kilos of cocaine.

**Phase five:** A clandestine drug laboratory was discovered in Barcelona next to an indoor cannabis plantation with over 1 150 plants. A 15-meter long speedboat belonging to this criminal network and loaded with 7 000 litres of gasoline was also seized in the region of Murcia.

**Phase six:** At the end of February, the remaining members of the criminal network were arrested. Some 6 000 litres of drug precursors were also seized, destined for a clandestine laboratory in Murcia.

## **Europol's support**

Europol's EU Drugs Unit coordinated the intense international activity from the onset of this Investigation. Its team of specialists facilitated the exchange of information between the different countries involved and analysed the operational data to identify the main targets.