

Successful Operation against Sexual Exploitation of Women

[ES](#)

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□Eurojust and Europol have supported coordinated judicial investigations in Spain (Investigative Court no 34 and Prosecution Office in Madrid) and Romania (DIICOT Prosecution Office) to dismantle an organised criminal group (OCG) involved in trafficking women for sexual exploitation in Madrid. On the law enforcement side, the Spanish Guardia Civil and the Romanian Police have joined forces, supported by Europol.

The investigation began in 2016, when the Spanish Guardia Civil received a report from a Romanian woman. She had been recruited months ago in her country of origin by the Loverboy method, a man who made her fall in love with him under false promises of a better life in Spain. Once in Madrid, she was forced into prostitution. Investigations revealed the existence of an OCG, and identified other victims.

Police officers carried out five house searches in Madrid and eight in Romania. As a result, a large amount of documents, cash, guns and mobile telephones and twelve high-value vehicles were seized. In total, nine Romanian women were safeguarded. Proceedings were initiated against eleven suspects in both Member States, and, among those, nine were arrested, including the OCG leader.

Europol supported the investigation by facilitating information exchange and providing analytical support. On the action day, two Europol analysts were deployed to Spain for on-the-spot support including real-time data exchange and cross checks against Europol databases.

Eurojust organised two coordination meetings, with the participation of judicial and police authorities and Europol. To further facilitate coordination, a joint investigation team, which brought together the competent authorities from Spain and Romania, was established in February of this year, with funding from Eurojust, and with the participation of Eurojust and Europol.

To help determine the best-placed jurisdiction and to avoid the risk of a conflict of jurisdiction, a Joint Recommendation was issued on 13 November by the National Members of Romania and Spain and sent to the respective national competent authorities.