

Over EUR 2.8 billion worth of drugs in Eurojust-supported cases in 2019

20 January 2020

With the support of Eurojust, EU Member States last year tackled illicit drug trafficking worth over EUR 2.8 billion. Approximately EUR 2 billion in criminal assets were frozen and over a thousand weapons, mobile phones, laptops and cars were seized. A total of 2 686 suspects were arrested or surrendered to other Member States, through action days, coordination meetings and other judicial support provided by Eurojust. These first operational achievements were presented today to European Commissioner for Justice Mr Didier Reynders by Eurojust President Mr Ladislav Hamran.

Eurojust President Mr Ladislav Hamran said: 'It is our role to assist Member States in combatting cross-border crime and to deliver concrete results, in order to get justice done and show citizens that crime doesn't pay. We stand ready, on a daily basis, to support the EU and the countries with which we have cooperation agreements, to give appropriate judicial support and coordinate actions, which otherwise would be very difficult.'

European Commissioner for Justice Mr Didier Reynders stated: 'I warmly welcome these results, which show that Eurojust has gained full speed and is giving rapid judicial support and follow up to requests from Member States. It is only through such active cross-border coordination and the pivotal role of the Agency that we can really tackle international organised crime. Criminals don't stop at borders; European judicial cooperation is essential to take action against them.'

The volume of drugs involved in Eurojust cases consisted of 788 133 kilos of synthetic drugs, 28 585 kilos of cocaine, 9 224 kilos of heroin and 41 283 kilos of cannabis. In total, 21 323 victims of crime were concerned in cases referred to Eurojust by Member States last year. 800 agreements were made on the most effective strategy to prosecute suspects.

Eurojust organised 27 coordination centres in 2019, during which major coordinated judiciary and law enforcement actions were taken, at the request of and in close cooperation with authorities in Member States. Additionally, 430 coordination meetings were held, to prepare and take judicial actions in EU and third countries.

The total number of cases supported by or coordinated through national desks at Eurojust grew by 17 percent last year, to 7 804, of which nearly half were newly opened. This figure is more than double the number of cases dealt with in 2014 (3 401). The full results of 2019 will be presented this spring in the annual report of Eurojust, which will also focus on priorities such as combatting terrorism, cybercrime, trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling.



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[Eurojust helps reveal fake organic food fraud](#)

The Hague, 1 July 2019

 In close cooperation with Eurojust, Italian and Serbian national authorities unravelled a transnational large-scale fraud in the production and trade of allegedly organic food and beverages from rotten apples. In a successful joint action, coordinated by Eurojust, 9 suspects of an organised crime group (OCG) were arrested. Illegal assets worth €6 million as well as 1,411 tonnes of adulterated product with an estimated value of almost €5 million were seized. 6 companies involved in the criminal activities were searched in the countries concerned.

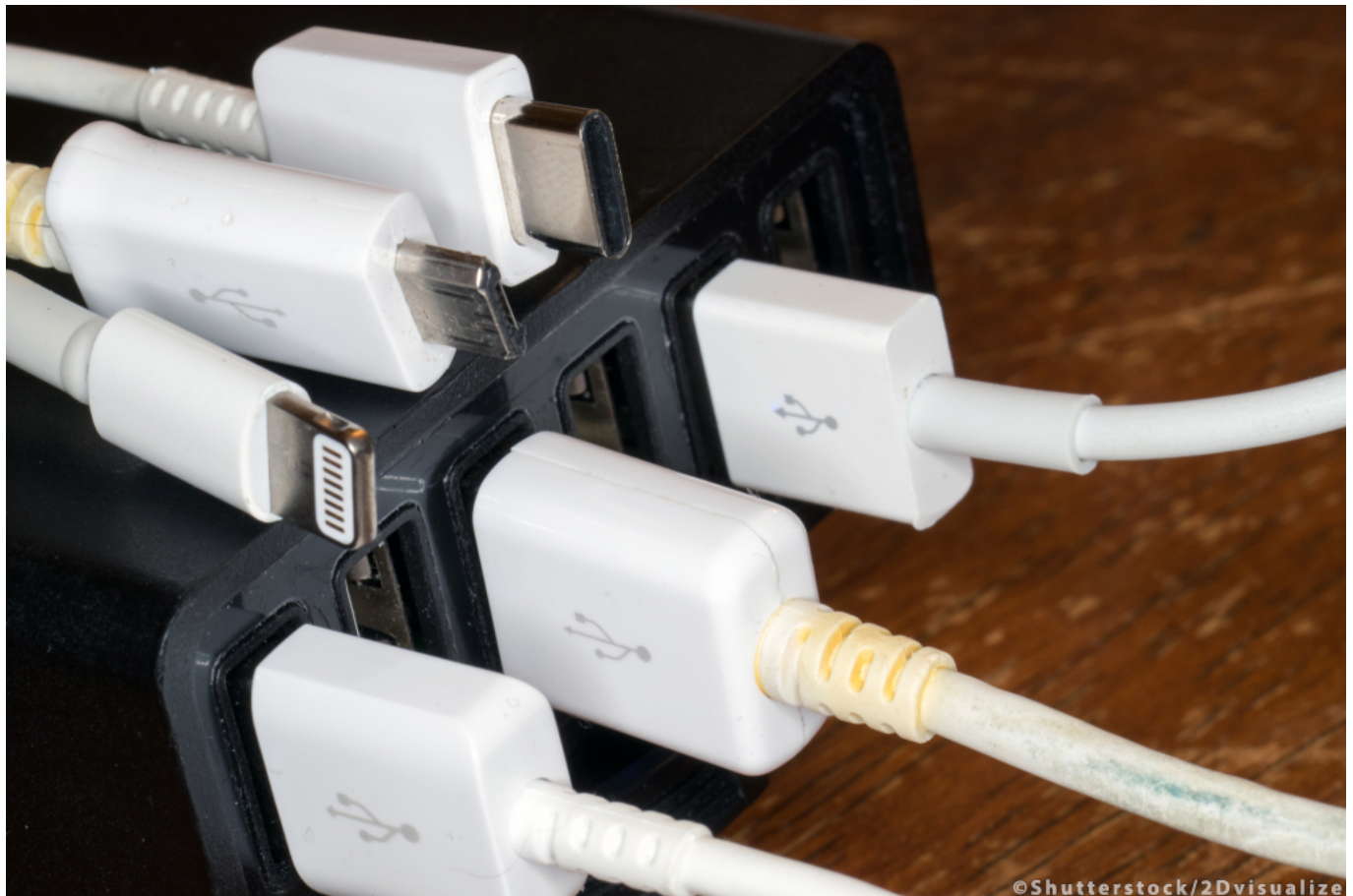
The Public Prosecutor of Pisa, Italy, initiated a massive investigation into the international OCG, which had branches in several countries. The investigations in those countries, which were actively coordinated by Eurojust in The Hague, revealed an OCG involved in the trade of adulterated juice, jams and other canned food. The products were made from decomposed apples, contaminated with mycotoxins and other toxic chemical substances, unsuitable for human consumption and dangerous for public health. They were then refined with water and sugars, and falsely labelled and promoted as organic products of European origin.

Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, facilitated the communication and cooperation between the Italian Desk at Eurojust and the Eurojust contact point in Serbia. Eurojust enabled the coordination of the national authorities' investigations by helping them swiftly exchange data and evidence, and ensured the successful outcome of the simultaneous operations.

8 arrest warrants were executed in Italy and 1 in Serbia. The arrestees, which are mainly of Italian and Serbian nationality, are suspected of committing fraud and participation in a criminal organisation.

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Article – MEPs call for a common electronic charger



They called on the European Commission to come up with a proposal by July 2020 during a [debate on 13 January](#). The Parliament's [internal market and consumer protection committee](#) is behind the initiative as its members want a common charger for smartphones, tablets, e-book- readers, smart cameras and wearable technology.

Committee Vice-Chair [Róża Thun und Hohenstein](#) said: "The Commission has to show leadership and stop letting tech giants dictate us standards. If digital sovereignty means something to this new Commission, we expect a proposal to establish a standard of a common charger, within the next six months." The Polish EPP member had submitted [a question for oral answer](#) to the Commission about the issue.

Social and green benefits

The introduction of a common charger would reduce electronic waste, lower costs and improve the safety and interoperability of chargers.

A 2014 [study](#) showed a reduction in the number of different chargers for smartphones from 30 in 2009 to three. However, when buying new devices, new chargers automatically come with the device.

According to the European Commission, electronic waste is one of the fastest

growing waste streams in the EU, expected to grow to [more than 12 million tonnes by 2020](#).

Commission's voluntary approach

EU lawmakers called for the development of a common charger in 2014. So far, the Commission has pursued a voluntary approach to encourage mobile phone manufacturers to cooperate.

Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, representing the European Commission, told MEPs that the voluntary approach was “the best way of achieving our policy achievements without hampering innovation”.

[Climate diplomacy: Council renews the EU's commitment to place climate action at the centre of external policy](#)

Foreign ministers today discussed **climate diplomacy** and restated the political centrality of climate action for the European Union. Following the discussion, the Council adopted conclusions on climate diplomacy. This is a clear sign that in 2020 **climate** will be one of the **priorities in the EU's external policy**.

In its conclusions, the Council recalls that climate change is an **existential threat** to humanity and biodiversity across all countries and regions, and requires an urgent collective response. For this reason, **EU leadership through example** is crucial for raising the level of global climate ambition.

The Council highlights that the EU needs to **urge third countries** to intensify their efforts alongside the EU, and **support them** in their endeavours through all EU external policy instruments. The conclusions also stress the importance of **stepping up outreach** activities on climate action with partner countries and regional organisations, including in the context of upcoming summits.

In line with its commitment to the Paris Agreement, the objective of achieving a climate neutral EU by 2050, and the outcome of the December 2019 European Council, the Council calls on the High Representative, Commission and member states to **work jointly** and **urgently** towards a **strategic approach** to Climate Diplomacy by June 2020 that identifies concrete, **operational ways forward**.

[Visit the meeting page](#)