

Eurojust supports new major crackdown on fraud with pay TV

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Authorities in Spain, Denmark, Sweden and Germany have arrested 11 suspects for offering illegal access to over 40 000 streaming services, subscription television channels and films, violating audiovisual copyright on a large scale. During an action day coordinated via Eurojust, 50 servers were taken down in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland and Spain, through which an estimated 2 million subscribers worldwide could illegally view programmes and films from, for instance, Netflix, Amazon and HBO. In a [similar case last September](#), Eurojust coordinated a major action that led to the takedown of more than 200 servers.

In addition to the arrests, 15 places were searched and one property, luxury cars and jewellery, cash and crypto-currencies have been seized for a total value of approximately EUR 4.8 million. Another EUR 1.1 million has been frozen in various bank accounts. The estimated proceedings for the suspects amounted to at least EUR 15 million. Europol provided analytical support to the operation and was involved in organising a joint meeting with Eurojust to set up the action day for this operation.

The criminal organisation operated mainly from Spain, using various websites in the EU and third countries to grant customers access to television channels and online providers for prices well below market value, by illegally tapping into the signal of established copyright holders. For this purpose, they used computer servers to access the content of legally operating broadcast enterprises and then illegally redistributed the intercepted content to their customers.

The organised crime group behind the illegal activities started its operations in 2014. The criminal organisation accepted payment via PayPal, bank transfers and cryptocurrencies, with servers for the processing of the transactions in Poland. The Spanish authorities opened investigations last year, originally looking into both the illegal sale of broadcasts of sports events via pay television and money laundering. Later, the investigations were extended to a much wider scope of illegal online access to pay TV services. In Sweden, a parallel criminal investigation has been ongoing since 2017, focusing on services targeting the Swedish market.

 To prepare for the operation, Eurojust organised two coordination meetings and a coordination centre, and supported the Spanish authorities with the execution of [European Investigation Orders](#) and requests for Mutual Legal Assistance. The operation on the ground was led by the Investigating Court 6 and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Alicante, together with the Intellectual Property Crime Section of the *Policia Nacional* in Spain.

In Sweden, the investigation was led by the Intellectual Property Crime Unit of the Swedish Prosecution Service, supported by the Swedish police. Additional support was provided by the National Organised Crime Agency, Cyber Crime Section of the National Police of the Czech Republic, the Interregional Specialised Jurisdiction (JIRS) of Lille in France and the Central Cybercrime Bureau (OCLCTIC) of the French Police.

See also : [Letter of recognition](#) by global film producers of Motion Pictures Association MPA

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