

180/2018 : 21 November 2018 – Opinion of the Advocate General in the case C-563/17

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Illegal online gambling scheme dismantled

12 November 2018

✘ After a 15-month investigation conducted by the Portuguese Public Prosecutor's Office, and with the assistance of Eurojust and Europol, judicial and law enforcement authorities in Portugal and Luxembourg successfully dismantled an organised criminal group (OCG) of more than one hundred people. In one year, the OCG's profits were estimated at EUR 80 million in activities involving illegal online gambling, money laundering and tax fraud.

Between 6 and 8 November, Operation *Shadow Game* led to a total of 267 searches in Portugal and 8 searches in Luxembourg, resulting in the seizure of EUR 576 000, approximately 3 000 computers and tablets used in illegal gambling, 428 pieces of hardware, 22 firearms and 86 vehicles. More than EUR 6 million in criminal assets was recovered. Thirty people were arrested, 29 in Portugal and 1 in Luxembourg, and 14 commercial companies were charged with criminal activity.

The OCG operated since 2015 in several EU Member States and internationally.

The operation was led by the Portuguese Public Prosecution Office (PP0), and was carried out by the Fiscal Action Unit of the Portuguese Republican National Guard (*Unidade de Ação Fiscal da Guarda Nacional Republicana*) and several territorial police departments, with the cooperation of the judicial and law enforcement authorities of Luxembourg. The international coordination would not have been possible without the coordination of Eurojust, which assisted with the issuing of European Investigation Orders and freezing orders, and the support of Europol.

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[Belgian fugitive detained in Spain](#)

□Eurojust and Europol cooperate successfully with national authorities

20 November 2018

✘With the support of Eurojust and Europol, the Spanish judicial authorities (*Juzgado de Instrucción no 1* in Torrevieja) and the Belgian Public Prosecutor's Office and judicial authorities, in coordination with the Spanish *Guardia Civil* and the Belgian Federal Police, arrested a Belgian fugitive, described as 'very dangerous', in Torrevieja, Spain.

The action day, which took place on 7 November, was prepared by the Eurojust Belgian and Spanish Desks, which liaised directly with their national authorities. The Belgian and Spanish magistrates worked together in Spain to draft the European Arrest Warrant, and direct the arrest, as well as the searches and seizures of three houses and a restaurant in Spain, resulting in the shutdown of the restaurant used to launder the money and the freezing of two properties, bank accounts and a vehicle, as well as documents, electronic devices, credit cards and a substantial amount of cash.

The suspect escaped from Belgium in January 2018 after committing more than 20 extremely violent robberies. He had then been sought by the Belgian authorities. The suspect belonged to an organised crime group and is the alleged perpetrator of other crimes, such as drug trafficking and the illegal trade of firearms. The Belgian Federal Police suspected the fugitive could be hiding in Torrevieja, and requested the cooperation of the Spanish *Guardia Civil*, which launched an investigation and surveillance activities. The investigation revealed that the fugitive laundered the illicit proceeds derived from his criminal activity in Belgium through a restaurant in Spain – a cash-intensive business – and then reinvested the money in real estate.

Europol provided analytical support during the investigation by cross-checking data and facilitating information exchange.

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[Cigarette smuggling from Eastern Europe](#)

Eurojust's coordination supports action against organised crime group in Italy

19 November 2018

✘ On 15 November, coordinated action was taken against an Italian organised crime group (OCG) involved in the smuggling of cigarettes from Eastern European countries into Italy. Eight people were arrested, and assets totalling EUR 15 million were seized during searches in two countries.

In a complicated scheme, the cigarettes were stolen from a factory, with a destination in Libya listed as the recipient. The goods were indicated on the fraudulent paperwork as having travelled through Italy, thus receiving a special tax exemption. Once in Italy, the tobacco was unloaded and a false container with empty boxes continued on to Libya. The cigarettes were resold in Italy on the black market.

The successful action could not have been carried out without the valuable cooperation of the Romanian authorities, and the coordinating role of Eurojust in the execution of two European Arrest Warrants and one European Investigation Order in Romania at the request of the Public Prosecution Office of Naples.

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Conclusions of the 50th meeting of the EEA Council

Roaming charges ended in the European Union on 15 June 2017. Europeans travelling within EU countries will 'Roam Like at Home' and pay domestic prices for roaming calls, SMS and data. ...

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017, ...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. ...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...