

# Six arrested for armed robberies of jewellery shops across Europe

An organised crime group behind a sting of violent armed robberies committed across Europe has been dismantled as a result of an international investigation facilitated by Europol.

A total of six individuals – all Estonian nationals – were arrested over the course of the past two years.

The smash-and-grab gang, armed with large hammers and a handgun, would hold up at gunpoint the employees of jewellery shops, before breaking the glass counters and running off with the jewellery.

This organised crime group has been linked to two robberies in Bastia (France) in 2016 and 2017, one attempted robbery in Venice (Italy) in 2017 and one robbery in Innsbruck (Austria) in 2017.

The investigation into these robberies was carried out by the French Police (Police Nationale), together with the Italian Carabinieri Corps (Arma dei Carabinieri), the Austrian Federal Police (Bundespolizei), the Finnish Police (Poliisi) and the Estonian Police (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet).

The international coordination was carried out by Europol who brought together in 2017 the national investigators who have since been working closely together. Since then, Europol has provided continuous intelligence development and analysis to support the field investigators.

This operation was carried out in the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).



In 2010 the European Union set up a [four-year Policy Cycle](#) to ensure greater continuity in the fight against serious international and organised crime. In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 – 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. This is achieved by improving and strengthening cooperation between the relevant services of EU Member States, institutions and agencies, as well as non-EU countries and organisations, including the private sector where relevant. [Property Crime](#) is one of the priorities for the Policy Cycle.

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## Weekly schedule of President Charles Michel



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## Media advisory – Journalist physical presence in Luxembourg (ECCL), June 2021



In light of the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions both in Belgium and Luxembourg, a limited number of journalists will be allowed to attend physically the following Council meetings taking place at the European Convention Centre Luxembourg (ECCL), in accordance with the physical space available, the capacity of press venues and current social distancing rules:

- Eurogroup, 17 June 2021
- Economic and Financial Affairs Council, 18 June 2021
- Foreign Affairs Council, 21 June 2021
- General Affairs Council, 22 June 2021
- Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 28-29 June 2021

The following **mandatory steps** are required, within the respective **deadlines**:

Access to ECCL cannot be granted if you do not complete the two steps above, by the following **deadlines**:

- **Wednesday 16/6** for Eurogroup and Ecofin on 17-18/6
- **Friday 18/6 16:00** for Foreign Affairs and General Affairs on 21-22/6
- **Friday 25/6 16:00** for Agriculture and Fisheries on 28-29/6

Should the number of requests exceed the number of available places to guarantee the respect of social distancing, a selection will be made on a first-come first-served basis using the date/time of the registration form submission. Should this happen, those media representatives that could not be admitted will be informed by e-mail.

To help us grant access to as many media representatives as possible, please inform the press centre immediately should you decide not to attend in person, via mail to [\[email protected\]](#).

Presidency/HRVP press conferences will remain accessible also in video conference (Zoom). Information to connect will be shared through the usual channels: instant messaging (Signal) or e-mail (for new registered users).

Council Press Centre

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## [Access to key services for children in need: Council agrees European Child Guarantee](#)



The Council today adopted a recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee. The aim of the recommendation is to prevent and combat social exclusion of children in need by guaranteeing access to a set of key services, thereby also helping to uphold the rights of the child by combating child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

In particular, it is recommended that member states guarantee effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare, as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

Our children are our future. The European Pillar of Social Rights action plan has set an ambitious target of reducing by five million by 2030 the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and this was reinforced at the Porto Social Summit. The European Child Guarantee is a major step forward towards this goal.

We need concerted action to make sure we tackle disadvantage and exclusion during our children's early years, to guarantee a brighter future for their adult life.

*Ana Mendes Godinho, Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal*

Nearly 18 million children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU and the COVID-19 crisis is expected to exacerbate existing inequalities.

The recommendation sets out a number of proposed measures for member states, such as:

- building a policy framework to address social exclusion of children
- identifying and addressing financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities
- providing at least one healthy meal each school day
- ensuring provision of educational materials, including digital educational tools, books, uniforms and any required clothing
- providing transport to early childhood education and care and education establishments
- ensuring equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips and sport, leisure and cultural activities
- implementing accessible health promotion and disease prevention programmes targeting children in need and their families
- providing for priority and timely access to social housing or housing assistance for children in need and their families

## **Background and next steps**

The European Child Guarantee is the first EU-level policy instrument which aims to address disadvantage and exclusion in childhood, which often lead to disadvantage in adult life. The Child Guarantee puts into practice Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, on childcare and support for children. The Pillar is the EU's strategy to build a fair and inclusive social Europe.

The recommendation stipulates that member states should nominate a national Child Guarantee coordinator to coordinate and submit to the Commission, within nine months of the adoption of the recommendation, an action plan covering the period until 2030. Member states should report to the Commission on the progress in implementing this recommendation every two years.

The European Commission is tasked with reviewing the progress made and reporting to the Council five years after the adoption of the regulation.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

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## Home affairs funds: Council adopts €18 billion funds for 2021-2027

The EU is increasing the scope of its funding for measures in the fields of asylum and migration, integrated border management and internal security, so as to address growing challenges in these policy areas.

The Council today adopted three sectoral proposals for the funding of home affairs policies, under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF). The texts now need to be adopted by the European Parliament.



Developing a common migration policy and improving the security of our citizens within the Schengen area require the funds to match our ambitions. In the past years we have adopted legislation to reinforce Frontex, as well as to improve the databases used to control borders and fight crime. The texts adopted today will allow us to bring these important agreements out of the paper and into reality.

*Eduardo Cabrita, Portuguese Minister for Home Affairs*

### **Asylum, migration and integration fund**

This fund will equip the EU with the necessary tools to respond to evolving migration challenges, both within the EU and in cooperation with third countries. It sets four specific objectives: asylum policy, legal migration and integration, irregular migration and returns, and solidarity and responsibility sharing between member states. Minimum percentages of the fund are linked to some of the objectives, with a minimum of 15% allocated to each of the objectives on asylum and on legal migration in the member states' programmes, and 20% allocated to the solidarity objective in the thematic facility. 5% of the thematic facility will target local and regional authorities to assist them in the integration of third country nationals.

Under the solidarity objective, the fund will increase incentives for transfers of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection between member states. Incentives for the admission of persons through resettlement and humanitarian admission will also continue.

The asylum, migration and integration fund also covers actions in third countries or in relation to them, while acknowledging the role of other EU funds intended to address external action.

## **Instrument for financial support for border management and visa**

The agreed text reflects recent developments such as the expansion of the European Border and Coast Guard, the modernisation of the common visa policy and the development and interoperability of large-scale IT systems (including the European travel information and authorisation system and the entry/exit system).

Under the new instrument, a minimum of 10% of the member states' programmes will be allocated to the visa policy, while the maximum percentage for operating support in the programmes has been increased to 33% of the funding. The co-financing rates for priority actions, such as measures to improve the interoperability of IT systems, have been increased.

The new provisions also enhance simplification, flexibility, cost-effectiveness and cooperation and coordination between national authorities. The assets purchased with a financial contribution from this instrument will also be used in other areas, including in customs and maritime operations or to achieve the objectives of the other two home affairs funds.

## **Internal security fund**

The fund builds on the current one and adapts it to new developments, such as the need to intensify the fight against terrorism and radicalisation, serious and organised crime and cybercrime. It will support measures to improve the exchange of information, to intensify cross-border cooperation, including joint operations on terrorism and organised crime, and to strengthen capabilities to prevent and combat crime.

Funding for the purchase of equipment has been increased in the member states' programmes to a maximum of 35%, while that for operating support has been raised to a maximum of 20%. Decentralised agencies will exceptionally be eligible for funding when they assist in the implementation of EU actions which fall within their competence and are not covered by the EU contribution to their budget made through the annual EU budget.

## **Background**

On 13 June 2018, as part of the next MFF package, the Commission issued three sectoral proposals in the area of home affairs. Drawing from lessons learned, and taking into account new policy developments, the Commission proposed a significant reinforcement of the EU budget in the areas of migration, borders and security.

[Visit the meeting page](#)