


[#JusticeDone: Rare books recovered in Romania in €2 million London warehouse heist investigation](#)

13 members of the Organised Crime Group behind the theft on trial in the UK



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On 16 September, following the execution of a European investigation order, a house search led by the Romanian authorities in the county of Neamt uncovered the rare books buried underground. Reported stolen from a warehouse in Feltham (UK) in 2017, the priceless historical antiques included first editions of Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The books will now be sent to Italy for examination in order to confirm their authenticity.

 This discovery is the result of an international cooperation between judicial and law enforcement authorities in the United Kingdom (Metropolitan Police Service), Italy (Italian Carabinieri – Arma dei Carabinieri) and Romania (Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism Central Office and Romanian National Police – Poliția Română) with the support of Eurojust and Europol. The individuals suspected with the theft are currently in pre-trial detention in the United Kingdom. 13 suspects have been charged with conspiring to commit burglaries between December 2016 and April 2019 and to acquire criminal property. Twelve have already pleaded guilty and the sentencing is due to take place end of September 2020.

A three year-long international cooperation

In 2017, following the €2 million heist in the UK executed by an organised crime group composed of Romanian nationals, a Joint Investigation Team was set up between the cooperating countries with the support of Eurojust and Europol. This joint investigation framework provided the involved judicial and law enforcement authorities with the analytical tools, the coordination of information exchange and the judicial expertise to carry out several criminal investigation activities. As a result, 15 suspects linked to the criminal organisation were arrested in the UK and Romania in [June 2019](#).

In [January 2020](#), further outcomes emerged from this coordinated investigation with the arrest of the kingpin behind the cultural loot. The suspect, a Romanian national wanted by the British authorities, was arrested in Italy (Turin) and his arrest and collaboration were decisive for the success of this important joint operation. The respective National Desks at Eurojust have continued to support the judicial follow up, including facilitating the transfer of judicial proceedings from Romania to the UK.

Safeguarding cultural heritage from organised crime

This operation is a double success for law enforcement who tracked the suspects down and recovered the stolen treasures before they went for sale. Europol's Analysis Project (AP) FURTUM dedicated to tackling all areas of property crime was involved and assisted with operational coordination, analytical support and the exchange and sharing of vital information and intelligence to support undercover agents.