

Elaborate bank fraud scheme dismantled

Coordinated takedown of a Romanian cybercrime network



In early 2019, an organised crime group (OCG) based in Romania began targeting unsuspecting bank customers in Lithuania and Estonia. Through so-called phishing messages that included links to counterfeit bank websites, victims were lured into providing their access credentials online. Via multiple online payments, money was transferred to bank accounts controlled by the OCG. The criminals also gained fraudulent access to a number of governmental e-services in Estonia. Around 600 victims, both individuals and companies, fell prey to this fraud, with damages in both countries amounting to over EUR 200 000.



29 September 2020 – Coordinated actions resulted in the arrest of 3 suspects and 4 house searches. Europol deployed an expert on site to cross-check in real-time operational information against Europol's databases and provide leads to investigators in the field.

Further investigative measures have since been taken to assess the full extent of criminal activities and proceeds, and establish possible connections to additional countries.



Four coordination meetings were organised through Eurojust in the course of 2020 to support information exchanges and prepare for the action day.



March 2020 – A **joint investigation team** was set up between Romania, Estonia and Lithuania, with logistical and financial support provided by Eurojust (to fund, among others, the participation of Estonian police officers in the operation in Romania).



2019 – Eurojust and Europol began, respectively, to facilitate judicial cooperation in and provide analytical and operational support to this case.

