

The dismantling of a drug trafficking network exploiting vulnerable people as street dealers



An organised crime group (OCG) involving at least 20 individuals, led by a Lithuanian national, had been operating a complex transport and distribution network since 2015, selling heroin in Ireland and the United Kingdom. The OCG recruited at least 65 people, nearly all Lithuanians, from vulnerable social backgrounds or drug addicts themselves, to become street dealers. Some of these people had been trafficked with the specific intent to commit crime. The proceeds of the operation were laundered by purchasing various real estate properties and through other related financial transactions.



26 August 2020 – coordinated judicial and law enforcement actions, monitored in real time from Eurojust's coordination centre, with operational support provided by Europol, resulted in:

- the **arrest of 18 suspects**, including the leader of the OCG
- **65 searches**
- the **seizure of assets**, with an estimated value of EUR 700 000.



Six **coordination meetings** were held in a secure environment facilitated by Eurojust to define a common strategy, taking into account the different jurisdictions, and to plan for joint actions and prepare mutual legal assistance (MLA) requests.



2018 – a **joint investigation team (JIT)** was set up between the Lithuanian authorities and their counterparts in Northern Ireland (UK), with financial and analytical support from Eurojust. Authorities in Ireland also joined the JIT during the investigation.



2017 – Lithuanian authorities referred the case to Eurojust.



Today's result wouldn't have been possible without close cooperation between the Lithuanian, Irish and UK authorities, as well Eurojust's support in facilitating the judicial cooperation between all the parties involved. This shows that by working closely together we can ensure that drugs are kept off the streets and people are kept safe.

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