



20 migrant smugglers sentenced to prison in Belgium with Eurojust support



CRIME: A criminal network is suspected of smuggling up to 10 000 Vietnamese nationals across the English Channel. Migrants are transported to the United Kingdom in small motorised boats supplied from Germany.

ACTION: An international operation is carried out by authorities in several countries, including Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, with the support of Eurojust and Europol. During the action day on 5 July 2022, 39 people are arrested and over 50 searches are carried out simultaneously in several countries.

Thanks to the intensive cooperation and exchange of information prior, during and following the joint operation, the authorities involved are able to deal a severe blow to one of the most significant crime groups involved in cross-Channel migrant smuggling.

EUROJUST'S ROLE: Eurojust supports the investigation and plays a key role in facilitating judicial cross-border cooperation between all parties involved. The Agency hosts four coordination meetings to prepare for the joint action day. During the joint operation, Eurojust sets up a coordination centre to enable rapid cooperation between the judicial authorities.

JUSTICE DONE: On 18 October 2023, the Belgian Court of Bruges sentences 20 suspects to prison terms ranging from 30 months to 11 years for their involvement in migrant smuggling. They are ordered to pay fines of up to EUR 80 000.