



Human trafficking network dismantled in the United Kingdom and Bulgaria



EUROJUST



November 2021 - The investigation into a human trafficking network begins in the United Kingdom (UK). The suspects approach vulnerable Bulgarian women and transport them to the UK, where they are forced to engage in prostitution and drug dealing in London and the surrounding area. The proceeds of the criminal activities are laundered through businesses and assets in the UK and Bulgaria.

January 2022 - The case is opened at Eurojust at the request of the UK authorities.

June 2022 - A joint investigation team is set up between the UK and Bulgarian authorities, supported and funded by Eurojust.

January - March 2023 - Two coordination meetings on 9 January 2023 and 7 March 2023 are hosted by the Agency to facilitate judicial cooperation and to prepare for the joint action day. Key issues are addressed, including the scope of the prosecution and jurisdiction. An agreement is reached that jurisdiction to prosecute all persons will be exercised in the United Kingdom.

April 2023 - During the joint action day on 26 April, nine suspects are arrested. Eight house searches are carried out, four in each country. Assets worth over EUR 1.1 million are seized, including cash, high-value vehicles and property. Five victims are identified and brought to safety.

October 2023 – JUSTICE DONE: The case is brought to trial at Southwark Crown Court and four defendants are given sentences ranging from six months custody to more than five years imprisonment.