

## Takedown of a multinational human trafficking network



**4 September 2021** – **Coordinated simultaneous actions** take place in Italy and the Republic of Moldova, resulting in the dismantling of the human trafficking network. **Six suspects are arrested** during the operation. **Nearly 90 victims are rescued** from the clutches of the group and given assurances of protection and legal assistance. **Evidence is secured to support judicial follow-up** in the respective criminal courts.

Italian and Moldovan authorities agree to hold a **fourth coordination meeting** at Eurojust in January 2022 to discuss jurisdictional issues (which courts will prosecute which suspects and for which crimes) to avoid possible conflicts of jurisdiction.



**March 2021** – Funded by Eurojust, a **Joint Investigation Team** is established, with operational support from Eurojust and Europol. Italian and Moldovan authorities pool their efforts and succeed in building operational synergies to map out the activities of the criminal group, while collecting and exchanging relevant information and evidence.



**March–December 2021** – **three coordination meetings** are held at Eurojust to discuss cooperation needs, plan the establishment of a joint investigation team and prepare for joint actions.



**January 2021** – In an effort to connect the two parallel national investigations, a **case is opened at Eurojust**, involving the **National Desk of Italy, Eurojust's Contact Point at the General Prosecutor's Office in the Republic of Moldova** and **Europol**, setting into motion a coordinated and structured international response.



Operating since early 2018, a criminal network in the Republic of Moldova uses online platforms to recruit vulnerable women. Coming from precarious socio-economic backgrounds, these women are promised jobs as domestic workers in Italy. Once engaged, they experience severe forms of labour exploitation, are forced to live in wretched conditions, and are subjected to intimidation and threats of violence. Their confiscated passports are used to prepare counterfeit documents, including false COVID-19 health certificates and employment contracts.

Moldovan and Italian authorities separately launch an investigation into this criminal group in 2019.

