



Q & A

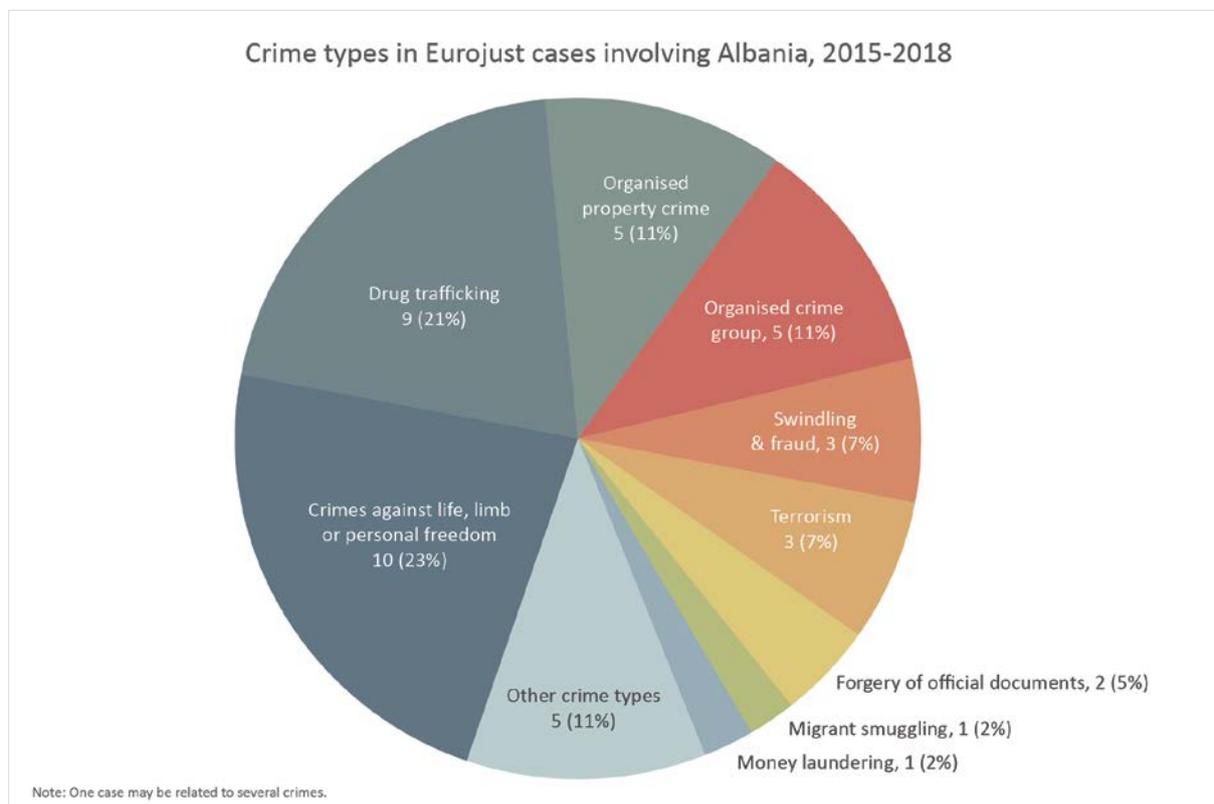
Eurojust's cooperation with Albania and the Western Balkans

How we arrived at the cooperation agreement with Albania?

Albania's cooperation with Eurojust originates from 2004, when the first Albanian contact point for Eurojust was appointed. Currently, there are two contact points for Eurojust from Albania. Since 2008, Albania has been included in Eurojust's priority list for a cooperation agreement. Between 2013 and 2016, Albanian legislation on data protection was adapted to EU standards to meet one of the requirements for commencing negotiations with Eurojust. In November 2016, following the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council's approval, the initiation of formal negotiations for the conclusion of a bilateral cooperation agreement was officially communicated to the Albanian government. In May 2017, Eurojust and Albania reached a preliminary consent on the wording of the cooperation agreement. The text of the agreement was approved by the JHA Council on 27 September 2018 and was signed by the representatives of Albania and Eurojust on 5 October 2018 in Tirana.

How does Eurojust cooperate with Albania?

Since January 2015, Albania has been requested for assistance in a total of 36 cases.

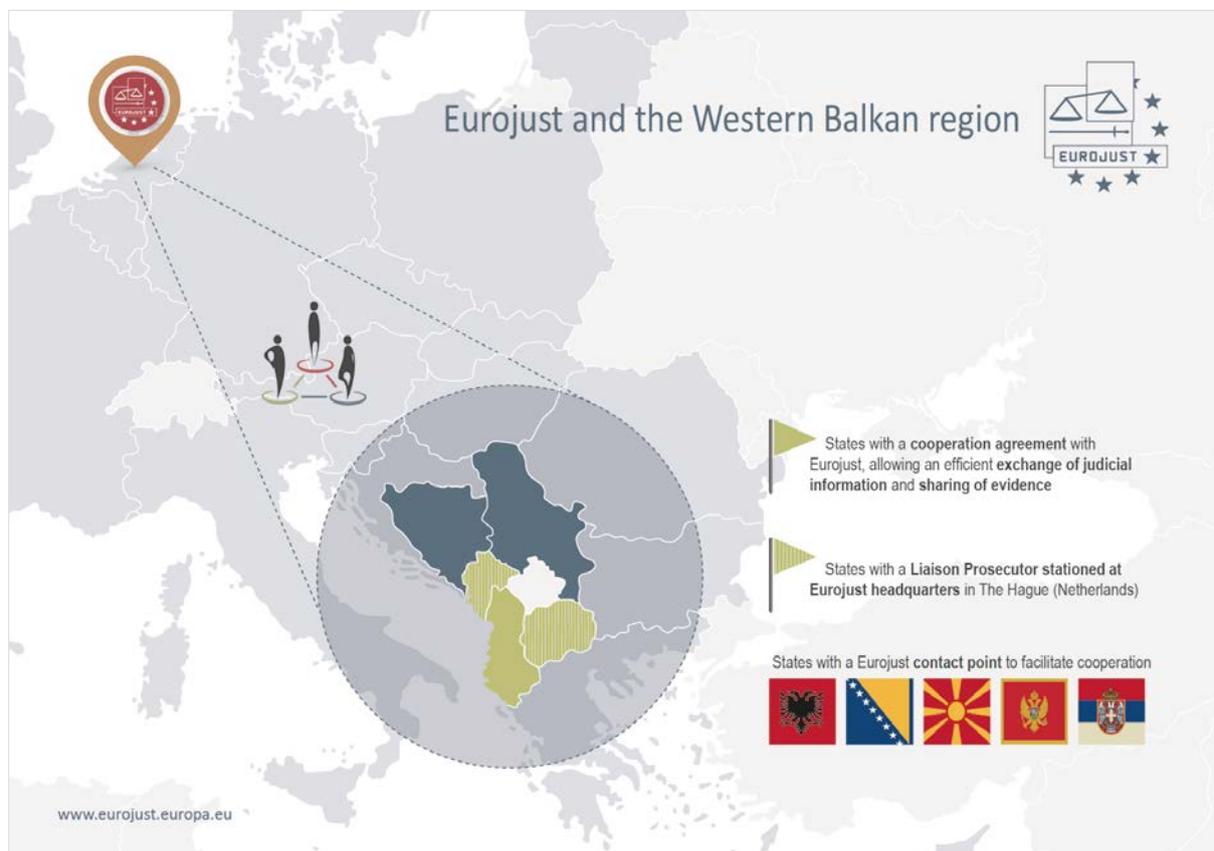


In 2017, the first joint investigation team (JIT) agreement was signed between Albania and Italy. The JIT is currently active. Another JIT with Albania was established in July 2018. Greece is the EU Member State with the highest number of registered cases involving Albania between 2015 and 2018 (16 cases), followed by Germany, Spain and Italy (three cases each).

Is Eurojust active in Western Balkans?

Eurojust has signed cooperation agreements with three Western Balkan States: Albania, FYROM and Montenegro. Since January 2015, 193 cases have been registered with Eurojust involving Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia, including the participation in nine joint investigation teams (JITs). Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina rank among the top 10 third States that actively cooperate with Eurojust on crime cases, in the role of a requesting or requested State.

How is Eurojust cooperating with Western Balkan States?



Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Bosnian contact points for Eurojust were first established in March 2014 to initiate negotiations for the conclusion of a cooperation agreement. Since January 2015, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was requested for assistance in a total of 35 cases. BiH was involved in two JITs and participated in eight coordination meetings in the same period. Since the beginning of 2018, BiH has been involved in nine cases.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYROM)

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYROM) has concluded a cooperation agreement with Eurojust in 2008. The first contact point for Eurojust was appointed in 2004, followed by additional contact points in 2018. fYROM has recently communicated that a Liaison Prosecutor will be appointed to Eurojust very soon. Since January 2015, fYROM has been requested for assistance in 23 cases and participated in two coordination meetings. In the course of 2018, fYROM was involved in seven cases.

Montenegro

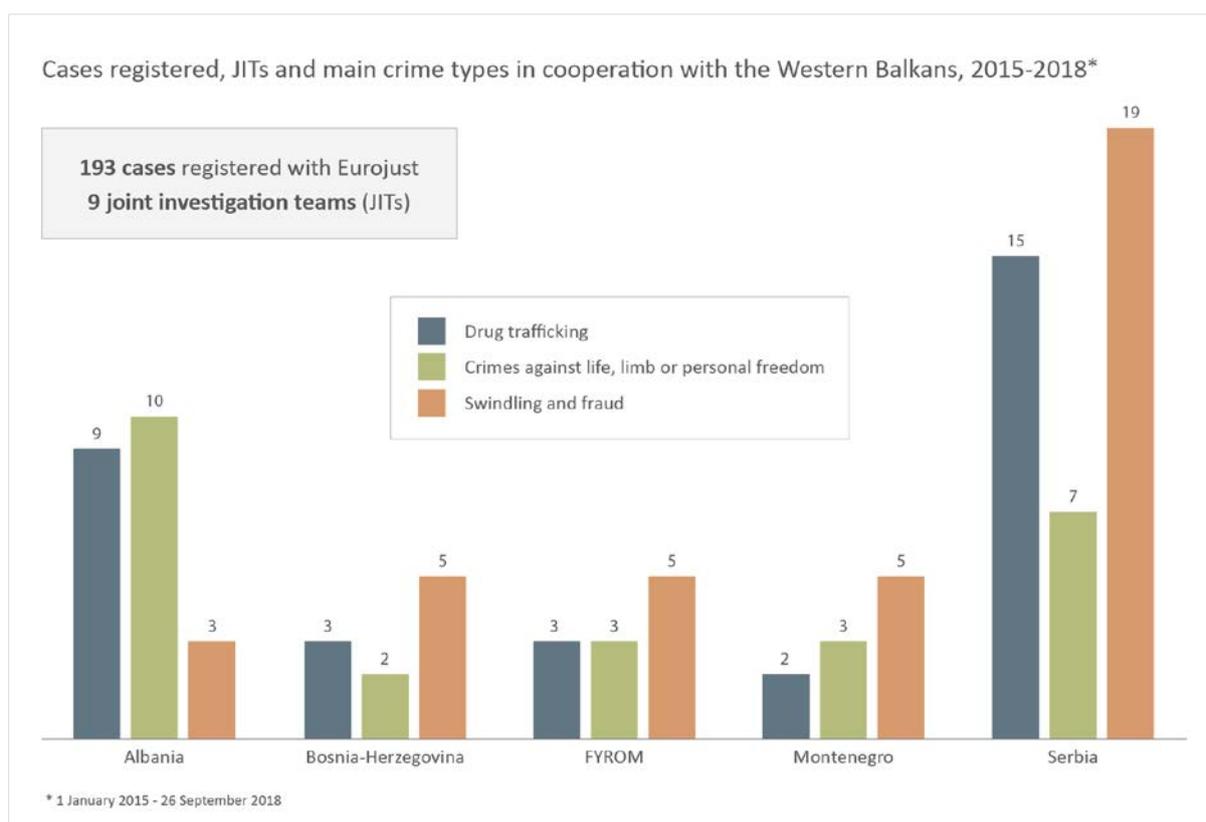
The first Montenegrin contact point for Eurojust was established in 2004. Eurojust and Montenegro entered into a cooperation agreement in 2016. In December 2017, a Liaison Prosecutor for Montenegro was seconded to Eurojust. In January 2018, Eurojust was informed of the appointment of an additional Montenegrin contact point on terrorism matters, in accordance with the cooperation agreement. Montenegro has been requested for assistance in 18 cases since January 2018. This is a substantial increase compared to previous years: 4 cases in 2017, 2 in 2016 and 2 in 2015. In 2018, the Liaison Prosecutor has registered 5 new Montenegrin cases, and Montenegro has been involved in 10 cases.

Serbia

A Serbian contact point for Eurojust is in place since 2004. Eurojust will maintain its established contacts with Serbia with the objective to conclude a cooperation agreement. Serbia is the most requested Western Balkan State in Eurojust cases and, since January 2015, has been involved in 94 cases, 20 of which only in 2018. Serbia participated in five JITs and 14 coordination meetings.

Which crimes types are more frequent in Western Balkans?

Organised criminality in Western Balkan States varies from terrorism to migrant smuggling, and organised property crime, the most common crime types being swindling and fraud and drug trafficking, as well as crimes against life, limb or personal freedom. Since 2015, Serbia has been mostly involved in drug trafficking and swindling and fraud cases, Bosnia and Herzegovina in organised property crime, whereas FYROM mainly in swindling and fraud and crimes against life cases. Montenegro's involvement was mostly in swindling and fraud cases.



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