

12 arrested for smuggling migrants across the English channel



The organised crime group (OCG), consisting mainly of Iranian nationals living in France, the Netherlands and the UK, endangered the lives of hundreds of migrants while transporting them from France to the UK, across one of the world's busiest commercial shipping lanes, in overloaded small boats and often rough weather conditions. The migrants were charged an average of EUR 3 000 per person for the crossing. The criminal network had purchased inflatable boats and engines from Germany and the Netherlands and transported them to departure points, where migrants were taught how to operate them.



28 September 2020 – A coordinated action spanning several days, involving judicial and law enforcement authorities from the four countries concerned, resulted in:

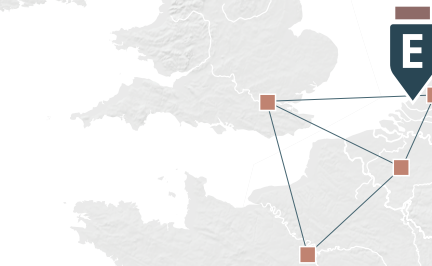
- the **arrest of 12 suspects**
- the **seizure of assets**, including vehicles, rubber boats and engines, a caravan and boat trailer, life jackets, jewellery, around EUR 48 000 in cash, documents and mobile devices.



September 2020 – A **joint investigation team (JIT)** supported by Eurojust and Europol was set up, allowing for further judicial coordination, continued information exchange and intelligence sharing.



June 2020 – Information was shared among French, Belgian, Dutch and UK authorities in an initial **coordination meeting** supported by Eurojust and Europol. Thanks to this information sharing, the UK identified a link to a domestic investigation.



By combining forces from the judicial authorities of The Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, we were able to put together all the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle very quickly and confront different members of the same OCG. In times rendered more difficult by COVID19, it was thanks to the Eurojust and Europol network and video conferencing that we could finalise all the necessary arrangements.

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