

EU-wide action against illegal pay-tv streaming



In 2019, Spanish authorities launched an investigation into an organised crime group (OCG) offering illegal streaming of TV programmes, series and films from platforms such as Netflix, Amazon and HBO to close to 2 million subscribers worldwide. A parallel criminal investigation had been ongoing in Sweden since 2017, focusing on services targeting the Swedish market.

03 June 2020: in a coordinated action supported by Eurojust and Europol, **50 servers were taken down** simultaneously in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland and Spain. The action also resulted in **11 arrests**, the **seizure of criminal assets worth EUR 4.8 million**, and the **freezing of EUR 1.1 million** in various bank accounts.

Eurojust organised two coordination meetings in preparation for this action day, and supported the Spanish authorities with the execution of *European Investigation Orders* and requests for *Mutual Legal Assistance*. Europol provided analytical support to the operation.

Crackdown on illegal use of pay-TV signals



In 2019, a major operation led by the Italian desk at Eurojust against an OCG involved in large scale pay-TV piracy and fraud, resulted in over 200 servers being taken down. **Investigations into the activities of this criminal network, which involved illegal online streaming through cheap set-top boxes, continued into 2020.**

Three coordination meetings were held at Eurojust in 2020 to exchange information, resolve judicial and operational issues, and organise an action day at the request of the Italian authorities.

11 November 2020: in a joint action monitored in real time from Eurojust's coordination centre, **over 5 550 computer servers** used to illegally transmit and store television broadcasts, live sports games and films **were taken down** in Italy, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the Netherlands. The action also resulted in the **arrest in Italy of the alleged leader of the OCG**. More than **700 police officers were deployed** in the countries involved during this operation.

Eurojust provided rapid assistance with the execution of *European Investigation Orders*.

Crackdown on one of the world's largest online piracy groups

In 2016, the **United States authorities launched an investigation into the Sparks Group**, engaged in 'cracking' the copyright protection of CDs/DVDs/BDs and hosting illegally obtained digital audio-visual content on servers located in several countries around the globe, including the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Latvia, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea.



May 2020: US authorities contacted Eurojust and Europol, through their liaisons, to discuss joint actions. Eurojust facilitated the transmission of 30+ *Mutual Legal Assistance* (MLA) requests to the relevant authorities in each country involved.

July 2020: Eurojust organised a coordination meeting with representatives from over 15 countries to discuss the MLA requests and prepare the joint action day.

25 August 2020: Over 60 servers were taken down in North America, Europe and Asia and **several key suspects were arrested** during the coordinated action.

2020 actions against intellectual property crime

Organised crime groups (OCGs) selling illegal online streaming services and pirated movies and TV series on the Internet, in violation of audiovisual copyright, cause major losses to the film production industry.

In four major coordinated cross-border actions in 2020, more than 5600 servers were taken down to stop this form of online piracy.

Coordinated action against illegal streaming



In 2019, **American film studios lodged complaints with the Swiss authorities about K-boxes used for illegal audiovisual streaming services** in more than 20 000 households.

The **Swiss authorities requested support from Eurojust through their Liaison Prosecutor** based at the Agency. This included organising a coordination meeting between the various authorities involved in Switzerland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Monaco, enabling the swift execution of *Mutual Legal Assistance* requests, and preparing for a coordinated action day. Europol supported the investigation with operational coordination and analysis.

10 November 2020: in simultaneous actions monitored from Eurojust's coordination centre, **11 servers were taken down** in France, Germany, Monaco, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

In addition, **three suspects were arrested** by the Swiss authorities, **computer equipment and communication tools were seized**, the **website promoting the illegal service was blocked**, and **eight bank accounts were frozen**.