The Agentur case:

German and Danish national authorities detected and dismantled an organised crime group arranging sham marriages with Eastern European women



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2015: The Public Prosecution Office in Hamburg detected activity by an organised crime group (OCG) that ran "marriage bureaux". They used "agents" to attract and recruit EU citizens, mainly Eastern European women in vulnerable situations willing to marry illegal immigrants, without having the obligation to live with their alleged partners.

Over **1,200 non-EU nationals**, each paying over **EUR 13,000** were first provided with stolen and/or falsified identification documents and subsequently with tourist visas.

The sham marriages were arranged in on a small, isolated island in Denmark, exploiting the fact that Danish legislation was quite lenient in the requirements to contract a marriage.

EUROJUST

German and Danish judicial and law enforcement authorities formed a **joint investigation team with the support and funding of Eurojust**, which also supported the organisation of coordination meetings, provided the **necessary mutual legal assistance** and helped to simplify the **judicial cooperation** between the national authorities.

The JIT worked closely together for a period of 18 months.

Europol facilitated the exchange of intelligence and provided tailored analyses to the investigators

A joint action day was organised to execute of numerous houses searches in Germany and Denmark and identify the main structure and modus operandi of the OCG.

As a consequence of this case, **the Danish Marriage Act was changed and more** stringent requirements were introduced to marry non-EU nationals. A specialised unit has been set up to control and scrutinise marriage applications where the persons wanting to get married are not both Danish or Nordic nationals or both have permanent residence permit in Denmark. The number of suspicious marriage applications in Denmark has since dropped considerably.