

70 arrests in pan-European action against child trafficking

At least 53 minors identified as potential victims

Europol supported a pan-European operation against trafficking of minors for sexual exploitation, forced begging and labour exploitation. The operation, led by the United Kingdom, involved law enforcement authorities from 16 EU member states, Iceland and Switzerland*.

Between 17 and 23 June 2019, over 127 000 individuals, 63 800 vehicles and 1 100 locations were checked. Law enforcement authorities searched private properties, commercial establishments, hotels, buses and train stations, ferry ports, airports and border crossings. Prevention campaigns in schools to inform minors of the risks of human trafficking were also part of the operational activities.

The overall results include 34 arrests for trafficking of human beings and 36 arrests for other offences such as robbery, dissemination of child sexual exploitation material and facilitation of illegal immigration. During the action days, 206 potential victims were identified, 53 of which were confirmed to be minors. These activities enabled the initiation of 31 new cases of human trafficking across the different participating countries.

During the operation, experts in trafficking of human beings from law enforcement agencies, child protection officers, social workers, representatives of municipalities and non-governmental organisations joined efforts to identify potential victims and investigate cases of child trafficking.

Europol facilitated the information exchange between the participating countries and analysed operational information against Europol's databases to provide leads to investigators.

The following countries participated to the Joint Action Days: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

Trafficking in human beings is one of the EMPACT priorities under the 2018-2021 EU policy cycle. Europol's Analysis Project Phoenix deals with different forms of exploitation, with current priority areas linked to sexual and labour exploitation, forced criminality and begging, forced marriages, child trafficking and human organ trafficking.