



EU DRUG MARKETS REPORT

A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Case study 4

Twenty-seven arrested as European police dismantle drug smuggling network

An international drug smuggling network responsible for trafficking large quantities of illegal drugs into and out of Spain has been dismantled. Operation Capea, led by Spain's Guardia Civil in Navarra, was coordinated by Europol and Eurojust, working in cooperation with French and Dutch law-enforcement authorities.

Over a period of years, this organised criminal group from Navarra was the main importer of amphetamine sulphate into Spain. Together with another criminal group based in Valencia, which supplied consignments of cannabis resin shipped in horse transporters, the drugs were concealed in cans and then transported by lorry to The Netherlands. On 30 November 2011, French police intercepted a lorry bound for The Netherlands which contained over half a tonne of cannabis resin. This was to be exchanged for 200 kg of amphetamine and sent back to the criminals in Spain for onward distribution.

The effective law enforcement cooperation demonstrated by this operation resulted in:

- a seizure of 675 kg of cannabis resin by French police.
- Spain's Guardia Civil carrying out 25 house searches and seizing:
 - 4.3 kg of amphetamine plus ketamine, cocaine and other illegal substances
 - an indoor cannabis plantation and more than 100 cannabis plants
 - four firearms
- 27 arrests in Spain in Valencia, Madrid, La Rioja, Zaragoza and Navarra. Those arrested were linked to three international drug trafficking organisations.
- Spanish customs (AEAT) blocking 97 bank accounts and seizing 19 apartments, six companies and eight vehicles as part of a parallel money-laundering investigation.



Photo: Europol.

Supporting the investigation were two Europol specialists who were present in Spain for the action day, deploying the Europol mobile office, as well as assisting with the secure dismantling of outdoor and indoor cannabis plantations. In the initial stages of the investigation, Europol hosted an operational coordination meeting in The Hague, and Europol drugs experts facilitated the exchange and analysis of key criminal intelligence.

