

Coordinated action against massive VAT fraud



28 April 2021 – A **joint operation** involving law enforcement and judicial authorities from Spain, Slovakia, Belgium and the Netherlands is organised through a coordination centre at Eurojust, with Europol providing analysis and cross-checking support. **22 suspects are arrested, 13 properties and 16 vehicles are seized and dozens of bank accounts are frozen.**



22 April 2021 – A **coordination meeting** is held at Eurojust to facilitate exchanges of information among all parties concerned and prepare for the swift establishment of a coordination centre on 28 April. Several **European Investigation Orders** and **freezing orders** are issued over the following days.



13 April 2021 – The **Spanish Desk at Eurojust** opens a case towards **Belgium, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia**, as well as **Europol** in the framework of its *Analysis Project Sustrans* which supports anti-money laundering investigations.



Late 2019 – **Spanish authorities launch an investigation** into a VAT evasion and money laundering scheme, involving large-scale forgery of documents, that will ultimately cost the country **EUR 26 million in missed revenues.**

To avoid paying VAT within the internal market, the scammers have set up a series of **shell companies in Spain, Slovakia, Romania, Belgium and the Netherlands** to fraudulently claim that goods are being traded internationally, when in fact they are never sent abroad and are therefore subject to VAT.

