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## **OLAF supports Italian authorities in dismantling major network of euro counterfeiters**

A large police operation led by the Italian Carabinieri took place on 26 November 2014 targeting an organised criminal group of euro counterfeiters operating from the Naples region. Precautionary measures – including detention and house arrests – were taken against 56 persons suspected of being part of this group.

Following an extensive investigation that started in 2012, with the support of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and of Europol, the Carabinieri were able to trace the methods used by this criminal group to gain control of the international counterfeit euro market.

It emerged that the group was responsible for distributing counterfeit money worldwide through a complex network of operations. The countries that were most affected by this criminal activity were France, Spain, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. Arrests were made yesterday in several Italian cities on charges of production and distribution of counterfeit money and of involvement in organised crime.

In relation to this same case, in January 2013, an illegal mint was dismantled in the presence of experts from OLAF's European Technical and Scientific Centre (ETSC). They provided technical expertise in examining the coins and established possible links with other counterfeit euro cases across Europe. ETSC assists law enforcement agencies by providing technical expertise in examining the coins and equipment seized and by coordinating technical actions to protect euro coins against counterfeiting.

The previous OLAF news item on the illegal mint uncovered in 2013 is available [here](#).

### **OLAF**

The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is threefold: it protects the financial interests of the European Union by investigating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities; it detects and investigates serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties by members and staff of the EU institutions and bodies that could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings; and it supports the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, in the development and implementation of anti-fraud legislation and policies.

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