



**COUNCIL OF
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TRANS 164**

NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Law Enforcement Working Party

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Subject: Final report on Joint Police Operation AUTOMOTOR

Delegations will find in annex the final report on the Joint Police Operation AUTOMOTOR, prepared on the basis of the guidelines set out in the Guide for Joint Police Operations (JPOs) (doc. 16825/10 ENFOPOL 343 JAI 995 COSI 76).

The LEWP is invited to approve the recommendation contained in this final report.

Final report on Joint Police Operation AUTOMOTOR

1. Background of the JPO, general description and operational methodology

Based on available information and statistics, it could be established that the nature of vehicle-related crimes has significantly changed lately. It can be clearly observed that perpetrators of vehicle crime have altered their methods, the sales market has also changed as stolen/misappropriated vehicles are being trafficked mostly abroad, often being re-registered in destination countries (duplications) or are dismantled and sold to parts. Another serious problem is posed by a method which appeared together with and is connected to the financing of vehicles (leasing, credit) and is the so-called financial fraud.

Recognising the importance of coordinating the activities of law enforcement authorities and their cooperation at the European level in the fight against organised vehicle crime, the Presidency initiated a Joint Police Operation AUTOMOTOR against organised motor vehicle-related crime, which took place from 8 a.m. 17 February 2011 until 8 a.m. 19 February 2011 with the participation of 17 Member States and Croatia, and in coordination with activities of TISPOL. The JPO AUTOMOTOR focused on stolen/misappropriated vehicles smuggled through road and maritime borders from the EU to the East-, South-East European, Asian and African countries.

2. Leading Member State of the operation and coordination structure

The operation was led by Hungary.

At the international level the leading and coordinating role was taken by the International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre of the Criminal Directorate of the Hungarian National Police Headquarters, at national level - by the Criminal Division of the Criminal Directorate of the Hungarian National Police Headquarters.

3. Participating countries, authorities and/or organisations

17 Member States, namely Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Estonia, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Germany, Italy, Spain, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as candidate country Croatia took part in the JPO.

Europol and Interpol also actively participated in this JPO: Interpol delegated 17 motor vehicle experts to the territory of Hungary, 1 expert from Europol cooperated with the Division Against Economic Crimes of the Budapest Police Headquarters.

4. Objectives of the operation

The objective of the operation was to control and stop cross-border activities of vehicle crime perpetrators dealing with all kinds of vehicle-related crimes (illicit trade in stolen vehicles, financial fraud, duplication etc.), to prosecute the perpetrators of vehicle crime, those stealing, receiving and trading in stolen vehicles or their parts.

This JPO also served the purpose of gathering vehicle crime-related intelligence, identification of criminal links of persons and firms involved in this activity and identification of new smuggling routes.

5. Summary of the operational results (based on indicators) and statistics

On the basis of the information provided in national reports¹, the results of the operation could be summarised as follows:

The number of staff which participated in the implementation of this JPO: 21 636 persons.

The number of controls carried out:

- of motor vehicles: 150 484,
- of persons: 156 510,
- of documents: 154 022.

¹ One Member State did not provide the evaluation report.

The number of hits:

- concerning motor vehicles: 145 (ASF: 7; SIS: 97; national: 41),
- concerning persons: 123 (ASF: 1; SIS: 54; national: 68),
- concerning documents: 34 (SIS: 24; national: 10).

On the external borders 112 341 controls were carried out, which resulted in 33 SIS and 29 national hits.

The following motor vehicles were seized in greater amounts:

- 26 BMW,
- 23 Audi,
- 19 VW,
- 14 Mercedes,
- 11 Opel,
- 13 motorcycles.

Also, 122 motor vehicle components were seized.

Most of the seizures were made on public roads, altogether in 40 cases.

Other seizures were made in the following locations:

- 14 in car parks, including those of department stores,
- 15 on land means of transport,
- 13 at land border crossing points,
- 28 at sea border crossing points,
- 7 in car workshops.

Seizures were made mainly in cases of detected stolen vehicles (92), but measures were also taken in 34 cases because of forged vehicle identification numbers. Moreover, 8 cases were related to embezzlement and another 8 to financial fraud.

The estimated total value of the seized motor vehicles is 2 024 800 euro. This is a rough estimate, as many participating Member States did not provide such data in their reports.

6. Costs

There is no information concerning the costs of this JPO.

7. Evaluation of the operation:

- **Level of realisation of the aims and objectives of the JPO**

On the basis of the information provided above, a conclusion can be drawn that the objectives of JPO AUTOMOTOR were met, and it can be regarded as efficient.

- **General assessment, including the analytical results, the added value and usefulness of the operation (including its cost efficiency) as well as difficulties encountered and lessons learned**

- The early revelation of the operation in the press occurred as a problem in Hungary. Measures were taken aiming to avoid such phenomenon in the future.
- Due to weather conditions (winter), the implementation of controls was rather difficult in the northern Member States.
- The participating countries supported and proposed future controls on routes in the direction of Africa, and suggested organising further similar JPOs.
- It appeared that in some Member States the procedure of seizing motor vehicles is slow and difficult, and that perpetrators exploit this fact for smuggling of stolen/misappropriated motor vehicles. Therefore, once a national warrant relating to a motor vehicle is available, it should immediately appear in the SIS, so as to provide a founded legal ground for control measures in the Member States.
- In their respective evaluation reports most Member States did not take into consideration nor provide data on the estimated total value of the seized motor vehicles. It would be useful to collect such data in the future.

- **Recommendation for possible future improvements or best practices and/or further action**

It is recommended that similar operations are carried out again in the future. It had been indicated that Poland during its incoming Presidency could make a proposal for organising such operation.
