

EUROPOL SUPPORTS INVESTIGATION INTO TERRORIST ATTACK AT BURGAS AIRPORT, BULGARIA

The Hague, the Netherlands
5 February 2013

Today Bulgarian authorities reported on their investigation into a bomb explosion that took place outside Burgas airport on 18 July 2012. Five Israeli tourists were killed in the attack, as well as the Bulgarian driver of the bus and the alleged perpetrator. Europol is pleased to confirm details of its substantial contribution to the investigation.

The Bulgarian authorities requested Europol's assistance in the immediate aftermath of the explosion. A Europol bomb-scene investigator, with access to a European network of similar experts and the European Bomb Database System hosted by Europol, attended the scene the following morning to assist with the forensic examination. Further support was provided at the scene by Europol's forensic document examiners, and by a team of experts based at the agency's headquarters in The Hague. This generated significant investigative leads, enabling the Bulgarian authorities to make rapid progress in this case.



Early assumptions in the investigation were that the attack was the work of a suicide bomber. But analysis of the bomb scene evidence by the Europol expert, including shrapnel from the improvised explosive device (IED), proved otherwise. It confirmed that the device had been remotely detonated and strongly suggested, therefore, that more than one person was responsible for the attack.

Meanwhile, forensic and technical examination of identity documents linked to the investigation led Europol to establish that a US driving license recovered at the crime scene and another recovered elsewhere in Bulgaria were both counterfeits from the same source, located in Lebanon. This discovery was of major importance to the investigation.

The Bulgarian authorities used Europol's secure communications network as a platform for the exchange of intelligence with other countries throughout this investigation. This allowed Europol to provide analytical support to the Bulgarian investigative team, checking and analysing large amounts of data, and helping to identify potential suspects.

With the assistance of Europol and a number of other international partners the Bulgarian authorities have made substantial progress in the investigation, leading them to uncover the identity of the suspects and their possible link to Hezbollah. Although a final determination of responsibility has not been made Europol's findings in the case are consistent with this view.

In light of these findings, Europol is assessing the impact of the incident on the threat of international terrorism in the EU.

Source URL: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/europol-supports-investigation-terrorist-attack-burgas-airport-bulgaria>