

# el Periòdic News

THEY HAD THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FRAUDULENT BUSINESS INSTALLED IN ANDORRA

## Millionaire money laundering through the purchase and sale of luxury vehicles

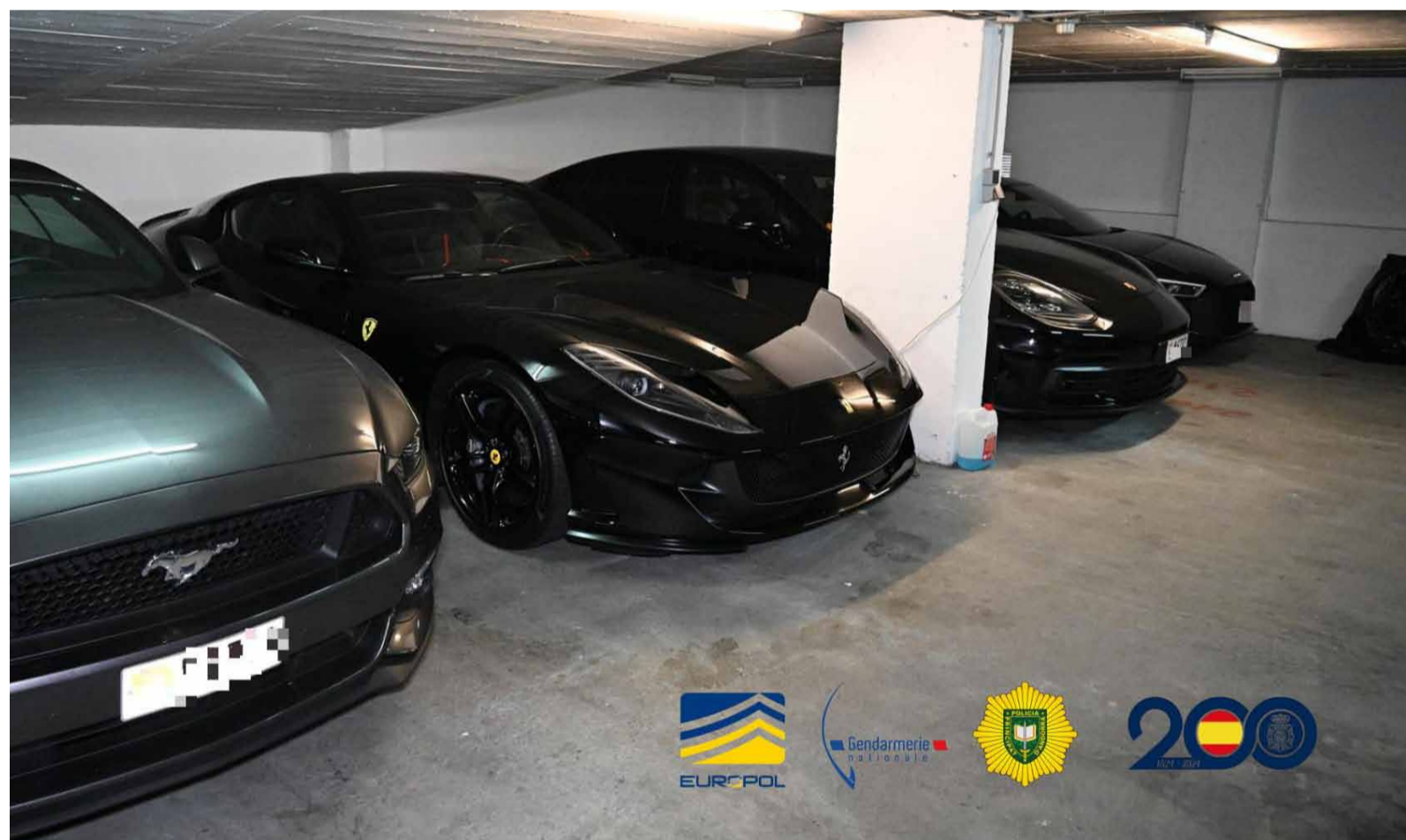
They were financed with funds from an international pyramid scheme with a 'Ponzi' system

EL PERIÒDIC  
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The Andorran Police, the French National Gendarmerie and the Spanish National Police, with the coordination of Europol, have carried out a simultaneous judicial operation that has allowed the arrest of a total of seven people as alleged perpetrators of crimes of money laundering, tax fraud and document falsification through a business of buying and selling and renting high-end vehicles.

The National Gendarmerie began the investigation by order of the Judicial Court of Draguignan in January 2024 in France following a complaint from TRACFIN - the French intelligence service specialized in the fight against money laundering, terrorist financing and fraud -, which detected suspicious movements in the bank accounts of a vehicle buying and selling company. This company received nearly two million euros in 2021 through transfers exclusively from a company in the United Arab Emirates, whose corporate purpose was very far from the marketing of cars.

The investigations, carried out initially under the direction of this French court and, subsequently, within the framework of a letter of request issued by an investigating judge, revealed the existence of aggravated money laundering. The origin of the funds would come from



Some of the vehicles that have been found by the Police in Andorran territory.

an international pyramid scheme that used a 'Ponzi' system, with a loss amounting to several million euros. During the investigation, dealers established in Andorra were identified that would have been used to launder part of the money through the purchase of luxury vehicles. From that moment on, collaboration was established between French and Andorran investigators through Europol agents. Subsequently, the main person involved in the case was located in Spain, at which point the Spanish National Police joined the operation.

An operation that has led to

**Four cars valued at 600,000 euros were confiscated in Andorra, adding to the fifteen already confiscated**

the arrest of five people in France and the execution, in Spain, of a European arrest warrant against the main suspect, as well as multiple searches in the three countries. In France and Spain, around fifteen high-end vehicles valued at 3.5 million euros and luxury watches worth 320,000 euros have been seized. On the same day, four more cars valued at 600,000 euros were seized in Andorra, numerous documents were seized and 120,000 euros were blocked in bank accounts. And, on Thursday morning, a seventh person was arrested as the alleged perpetrator of a money laundering crime. ●

## A RARE DECISION

# The tribunal releases the two accused on provisional release pending sentencing

The Public Prosecutor's Office maintains the request for more than eight years in prison

ELENA HERNÁNDEZ MOLINA  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

After spending 14 months in provisional detention, the Court has agreed to release the two accused (uncle and nephew) on provisional release for the alleged sexual assault that occurred in January 2024, in response to the request made by the defense during the final phase of the judicial process. According to Ràdio i Televisió d'Andorra, sources close to the case have indicated that this is an uncommon decision in this type of crime, which could reflect possible uncertainties on the part of the court regarding the solidity of the accusation.

The trial against the two accused men has reached its final phase this morning. The Public Prosecutor's Office has reiterated its request, requesting an eight-year prison sentence and expulsion from the country for 20 years for the older defendant – the uncle of the other defendant. In the case of the nephew, a sentence of eight years and three months



The specialized witnesses have questioned the coherence between the victim's testimony and the physical evidence.

**The case for the alleged sexual assault is scheduled for sentencing, which will be ruled on May 7th.**

of imprisonment is demanded, in addition to compensation of 2,000 euros and also expulsion from the country for a period of twenty years.

The defense of the defendants has requested acquittal, arguing that the evidence presented has revealed several inconsistencies in the victim's account. According to the lawyers, «the victim has provided up to five versions of certain key facts», a fact that

casts doubt on her credibility. In addition, they have shown the lack of conclusion in the genetic material that was shown in the reports, appealing that it is not confirmed that the DNA that appeared in the different tests - semen or seminal fluid - is compatible with that of the defendants. The lawyers also highlighted, in their request, the bruises observed on the victim's arms. According to some experts, «according to how the victim had related the events, the complainant should have presented bruises in other areas of the body, such as her thighs.» Finally, the prosecutor highlighted that, despite some inconsistencies in the victim's testimony, it must be taken into account that «the perfect victim does not exist», emphasizing that each person responds to situations in the way that is most appropriate for them at the time they occur, a fact that must be considered in the overall evaluation of the case. Therefore, this case is scheduled for sentencing, which will be ruled on May 7th. ●

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