

PRESS RELEASE

Alleged Mastermind of \$5 Million Unemployment Fraud Scheme Extradited from Romania

Friday, February 23, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of California

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NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – February 23, 2024

SAN DIEGO – David Constantin, alleged mastermind of a scheme to steal more than \$5 million in California unemployment benefits intended to help workers affected by the pandemic, appeared in federal court today following his extradition Monday to the United States from Romania.

At today's hearing, U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael S. Berg ordered Constantin detained pending trial. The next hearing is scheduled for April 1, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. before U.S. District Judge Larry A. Burns.

Constantin was indicted by a federal grand jury in October 2023 along with 13 others. In addition to the four counts of wire fraud conspiracy and wire fraud charges, the indictment also alleges that Constantin transmitted more than \$128,000 in fraud proceeds to associates in Romania.

Constantin was apprehended by Romanian authorities at the request of the United States on November 14, 2023. The United States also seized valuable assets connected to Constantin, and co-Defendants in this case, Eduard Buse (D6), and Florentina Sima (D7).

The following agencies provided critical assistance in securing Constantin's arrest and extradition: Directorate for Combating Organized Crime (DCCO) - Service for Countering of Organized Criminal Groups; Pitești Brigade for Combating Organized Crime (BCCO Pitesti); Teleorman County Service for Countering Organized Crime; Romanian

Gendarmerie Battalion; Romanian Ministry of Justice; and Romanian Criminal Investigative Directorate - Fugitive Unit.

“We thank Romanian authorities for their assistance in securing Mr. Constantin’s arrest and for their continued efforts in support,” said U.S. Attorney Tara McGrath.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jessica Adeline Schulberg and Valerie Chu. The Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs provided substantial assistance to secure the arrest and extradition from Romania of Constantin.

DEFENDANT
LAB

Case Number 23CR2090-

David Constantin
Romania

Age: 28

Arges County,

aka Vlad Alexandru

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, U.S.C. § 1349 — Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud

Title 18, U.S.C. § 1343 — Wire Fraud

Maximum penalty: Thirty years in prison, \$1 million fine

Title 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(A) — Laundering of Monetary Instruments

Maximum penalty: Twenty years in prison and \$500,000 fine or twice the value of the monetary instrument or funds involved in the transportation, transmission, or transfer, whichever is greater

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation

San Diego Police Department Economic Crimes Unit

IRS Criminal Investigation

California Employment Development Department Investigative Division

U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

*The charges and allegations contained in an indictment or complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Contact

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