



EUROPEAN **INVESTIGATIVE** COLLABORATIONS

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European Investigative Collaborations (EIC network) was established at the end of 2015. Over the past four years, EIC partners have published more than 1,500 stories, in a dozen languages, and in more than 20 countries. Of these 1,500 stories, over 1000 were based significantly on data provided by Portuguese whistleblower, Rui Pinto. And we are still publishing.

During this same period, EIC and its partners contributed meaningful resources - human, financial, and technical - to produce collaborative cross-border investigations of the highest public interest because we understood the importance of doing justice to the vital information contained within the data shared by Pinto.

Among these revelations are EIC's work on two Football Leaks projects, in 2016 (<https://eic.network/projects/football-leaks>) and 2018 (<https://eic.network/projects/football-leaks-continues>); the Malta Files (<https://eic.network/projects/malta-files>), in May 2017; and several reports detailing financial corruption in Angola (stories on Álvaro Sobrinho, Isabel dos Santos). We can now include ICIJ's Luanda Leaks project to the growing evidence on the importance of Rui Pinto's data.

The value of this has been confirmed many times over, by several independent authorities. As a result of Rui Pinto's bravery, European authorities opened criminal investigations and recovered millions of euros in payments or are in the process of doing so. In 2018, a network of European prosecutors established an official investigation through Eurojust to cooperate on exploring the data provided to them by Rui Pinto.

The above projects have created serious public-interest policy debates at an EU and national level. They also had a serious impact on the multi-billion-euro industry of football, as professional football bodies were forced to adopt more transparent and just procedures. Not least, there has been widespread, vocal support among European football fans.

EIC network does not wish to interfere in the judicial procedures in Portugal. We believe, however, that the crucial - and proven - high level of public interest of Rui Pinto's data cannot be understated. More than 200 journalists in two different collaborative networks have worked on Rui Pinto's data in the past four years, making front page stories in dozens of media outlets in Europe and around the world. So we hope that the facts he helped expose will enjoy the same level of judicial scrutiny in Portugal, similar to the judiciary attention Rui Pinto got over his alleged crimes.

The digital age has taken hold and electronic information is now the norm in both investigative journalism and the nature of leaks. Debates are necessary, now and in the future, about cases like Pinto's, about who may possess and publish information, and who can be called a whistleblower and given the proper rights and protections.

The knowledge Rui Pinto has provided to the public is of undoubted importance to society and cannot be undone. We remind our colleagues to label Rui Pinto for what he is: **a whistleblower**.

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