

# CRIMINALS DISTRIBUTING FAKE VIAGRA BUSTED

19 Mar 2012

## [Press Release](#)

In an operation led by Spain's Guardia Civil in Murcia, coordinated by Europol, and also involving the UK and Cyprus, six individuals have been arrested and almost 300 000 doses of fake medication seized. The criminals arrested are suspected of having been responsible for the import and distribution of large amounts of dangerous counterfeit medicines in Europe.

House raids and subsequent arrests at the end of last week in Spain (four people: 1 Spanish, 1 Dutch and 2 Romanian citizens), and the UK (2 British citizens) were the result of an international police operation spanning several months. Europol had its mobile office present in Murcia ready to assist during the day of arrests with direct access to Europol's intelligence databases.

The members of the criminal gang were importing fake pharmaceuticals from Asia – mainly China and Singapore – and distributing them via the internet to 'customers' throughout Europe. Amongst the drugs on sale by the criminals were well-known brands such as Viagra and Cialis, as well as generic medicines manufactured in clandestine laboratories in the source countries.

Unlicensed, untested and potentially laced with dangerous filler ingredients, fake medicine can put users' health, and even life, at risk. It is very common for counterfeit medication to contain no active ingredients and often they are made using ineffective or dangerous substances which can cause liver damage, irreversible health problems or even prove to be fatal.

Working closely with the affected legitimate pharmaceutical laboratories and other key partners, the successful outcome for 'Operation Tribulus' was thanks to close collaboration between: Europol; Guardia Civil; City of London Police; the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA); the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in Cyprus; Agencia Española de Medicamentos y Productos Sanitarios (Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products (AEMPS)); and the manufacturers Pfizer, Eli Lilly And Sanofi-aventis. During the planning of the operation experts from ECAB (Europol Criminal Assets Bureau) supported and gave advice to the participating countries.

CRIME AREAS [Intellectual property crime](#) • [Counterfeiting and Product Piracy](#)  
TARGET GROUPS [General Public](#) • [Law Enforcement](#) • [Academia](#) • [Professor](#) • [Students](#) • [Researcher](#) •  
[Press/Journalists](#) • [Other](#)  
ENTITIES [Financial Intelligence Units \(FIU.net\)](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/criminals-distributing-fake-viagra-busted>