

END OF THE ROAD FOR FUEL FRAUDSTERS: EU LAW ENFORCEMENT SEIZE 2.2 MILLION KG OF ILLICIT FUEL

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[Press Release](#)



A six-month long joint operation targeting organised crime groups involved in fuel fraud has resulted in the arrests of 25 suspects so far and the seizure of 2.2 million kg of illicit fuel. This illegal trade can cause damage to vehicles' engines, as the product is not compliant with the relevant European standards. Consequently, it can also be a risk to consumer health and safety.

So that the fuel would not be subject to excise regime once on the market (neither VAT nor excise duty are paid), the criminals produced a mixture of mainly gas oil and other added compounds to modify the final physical features of the product. As a result, the final product illegally sold on the black market was particularly attractive because of the much lower price and enabled the criminals to make huge profits. Customs and police intervention took place across Europe over a period of six months and concluded in July.

This large-scale operation involved 23 EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. It was supported by Europol experts who provided continuous analytical and operational expertise. The Customs Cooperation Working Party (CCWP) and the [World Customs Organization \(WCO\)](#) also supported the initiative.

Excellent international cooperation created a detailed intelligence picture of the modus operandi, routes, types of products and economic operators involved in the fraud. The actions have also revealed illegal unloading premises and supply chains, and resulted in the seizure of over 2.2 million kg of illicit fuel, 400 000 kg of other products (base oils, additives, etc.) and, thanks to the linked financial investigations, confiscation of various assets such as vehicles (109), estate properties (19), cash and bank accounts worth over EUR 3 million euros. Criminal proceedings and tax audits have been initiated in almost all EU Member States participating in the operation.



The operation was implemented in the framework of EMPACT. In 2010 the European Union set up a four-year Policy Cycle to ensure greater continuity in the fight against serious international and organised crime. In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to continue the EU Policy Cycle for the 2018 - 2021 period. It aims to tackle the most significant threats posed by organised and serious international crime to the EU. This is achieved by improving and strengthening cooperation between the relevant services of EU Member States, institutions and agencies, as well as non-EU countries and organisations, including the private sector where relevant.

CRIME AREAS

[Economic Crime](#) · [Excise fraud](#)

TARGET GROUPS

[General Public](#) · [Law Enforcement](#) · [Academia](#) · [Professor](#) · [Students](#) · [Researcher](#) · [Press/Journalists](#) · [Other](#)

COUNTRIES

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[Netherlands](#) · [Poland](#) · [Portugal](#) · [Romania](#) · [Slovakia](#) · [Slovenia](#) · [Spain](#) · [Sweden](#) · [United Kingdom](#)

ORGANISATIONS

[Customs Cooperation Working Party \(CCWP\)](#) · [World Customs Organisation \(WCO\)](#)

SUPPORT &

[Operational coordination](#) · [Operational support](#) · [Information exchange](#) · [Analysis](#) · [Mobile office](#)

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