

EUROPOL HELPS PARTNERS SEIZE MILLIONS OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS IN OLAF - COORDINATED OPERATION

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Approximately 200 000 pieces of counterfeit perfumes, toothpastes, cosmetics, 120 tons counterfeit detergents, shampoos, diapers as well as more than 4.2 million of other counterfeit goods (battery cells, footwear, toys, tennis balls, shavers, electronic devices, etc.), 77 million cigarettes and 44 tons of counterfeit water pipe tobacco have been seized by the Asian and EU customs authorities an operation coordinated by the European Anti-Fraud Office ([OLAF](#) [↗](#)) with the support of Europol.

Targeting counterfeit goods used in the daily lives of citizens, the Joint Customs Operation HYGIEA saw the participation of all EU Member States, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Rep. Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, and Vietnam.

During this operation, the customs authorities carried out targeted physical or X-ray controls on several hundred selected shipments transported by sea containers. These checks uncovered a wide array of counterfeit goods including counterfeit cosmetics, perfumes, soaps, shampoos, detergents, battery cells, footwear, toys, tennis balls, shavers, electronic devices, toys.

The results include:

- A total of 194 498 pieces of counterfeit perfumes, toothpaste, cosmetics as well as 120 833 kg of counterfeit detergent, shampoo, diapers seized;
- Several shipments of tobacco products – either found to be counterfeit or intended smuggled - containing 44 062 kg of water pipe tobacco and 77 811 800 cigarettes in total were detained;
- 4 202 592 pieces of other counterfeit items (battery cells, footwear, toys, tennis balls, shavers, electronic devices, etc.), including non-compliant with the safety rules or smuggled seized.

During the operational phase of HYGIEA, OLAF facilitated the cooperation between the participant countries with the support of a team of ten liaison officers from Bangladesh, China, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Spain and EUROPOL, all working together in Brussels. A Virtual Operational Coordination Unit (VOCU) - a secure communication channel for such joint customs operations was used to channel the flow of incoming information. This exchange of information in real time allowed all the experts involved to identify the suspect flows of counterfeit goods out of ordinary commercial transactions.

The Joint Customs Operation HYGIEA within the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) framework as part of joint efforts of the participating countries in the fight against counterfeit goods.

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