

FUEL FRAUDSTERS BUSTED FOR TRAFFICKING OVER 300 000 LITRES OF ILLICIT FUEL

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Europol supported an international operation led by the Criminal Office of the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic (Finančná správa Slovenskej republiky) in cooperation with Polish Customs (Służba Celna). The operation began in 2019 with surveillance as part of an investigation targeting mineral oil fraud in the EU. Thanks to this coordinated action, 16 000 litres of illicit fuel were seized in November 2019 and the organised crime group behind this illegal activities was dismantled.

SIGNAL JAMMERS TO NEUTRALISE GPS TRACKERS

The criminals worked in a very sophisticated way trying to avoid police operations. They used signal jammers to neutralise GPS trackers installed by the law enforcement authorities on the criminals' vehicles. At the same time, passenger vehicles accompanied all the oil deliveries, trying to ensure that the consignments could reach their final destination undisturbed. Despite these measures, the customs officers succeeded in detecting and apprehending not only the fraudsters but the ringleaders too.

On the action days, police officers carried out seven searches of properties and storage facilities. Consequently, 4 individuals were arrested, 16 000 litres of illicit fuel was seized, vehicles (two semi-trailers and three tractors), technical equipment, and documents proving that 348 000 litres of illicit oil had been shipped. Four weapons and signal jammers were also found and seized during the

searches.

EUROPOL RUNS THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Analysis Project Smoke at Europol continuously supports intelligence and targeting operational actions in this crime area. For this case, Europol's experts contributed by facilitating international cooperation between the Slovak and Polish authorities, cross-checking data against Europol's databases and providing analytical support.

The investigation is ongoing and the exact amount of the tax evasion still being quantified.

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