

OPERATION TAKES DOWN OVER 33 600 INTERNET DOMAINS SELLING COUNTERFEITS GOODS

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[Press Release](#)



- › Countries from the EU and beyond worked together to seize domains selling fake products.
- › Twelve suspects arrested and accounts worth over EUR 1 million seized.
- › The Operation IOS (In Our Sites), now in its ninth year, is more successful than ever.

As part of an international operation, Europol's [Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition \(IPC3\)](#) has seized 33.654 domain names distributing counterfeit and pirated items online. The websites distributed items such as counterfeit pharmaceuticals, pirated films, television shows, music, software, electronics and other bogus products. The joint international operation also involved the [US National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center](#) ¹ and law enforcement authorities from 26 countries including EU Member States and third parties², which was facilitated by [INTERPOL](#). [↗](#)

Operation **In Our Sites (IOS)** is a continuation of a recurrent joint global operation, which was launched in 2014 and has since significantly increased. The ninth edition of this worldwide operation in 2018 saw an even larger range of anti-counterfeiting associations, brand owner representatives and law enforcement authorities taking part to facilitate international cooperation and support the countries involved in this initiative. This year's operation IOS IX has seen a remarkable increase from the previous edition, where 20 520 domain names were seized as they were illegally trading

counterfeit merchandise online.

This is a result of Europol's comprehensive approach to make the internet a safer place for consumers by encouraging more countries and private-sector partners to participate in this operation and provide referrals.

In addition to the seized domain names, officials also arrested 12 suspects, blocked hardware devices, identified and froze more than EUR 1 million in several bank accounts, online payment platforms and a virtual currency farm used by the organised criminal groups.

Europol, in cooperation with the [European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#), [↗](#) continues to enhance such efforts by successfully supporting many high-priority investigations related to online crimes, providing training related to online investigations, and organising conferences such as the annual Intellectual Property Crime Conference.

To continuously raise awareness of this growing threat, Europol's IPC3 launched the campaign "[Don't F***\(ake\) Up](#)". The campaign informs citizens of the risks of buying fake products online and provides forthright advice to help identify illicit websites that sell counterfeit goods, as well as other means used by counterfeiters, such as fake social media accounts and fake apps.

¹ The Center comprises US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

² Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Hong Kong- China, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Republic of Moldova, Republic of Serbia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Portugal, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

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