

## 14.8 million litres alcoholic drinks seized across Europe

**Customs and police authorities have seized nearly 14.8 million litres illicit alcoholic beverages, wine and beer in a targeted action led by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). OLAF's targeted action was part of Europol-Interpol operation OPSON XI.**

Every year, Europol-Interpol Operation OPSON targets counterfeit and substandard food and beverages, and food fraud in general. Similarly to previous years, OLAF took part in the operation and led a targeted action focused specifically on illicit and counterfeit alcoholic beverages. OLAF coordinated the activities of 19 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Norway.

As a result of the action, national customs and police authorities seized close to 14.8 million litres illicit or counterfeit alcoholic beverages, wine and beer. In addition, seizures were made of counterfeit bottles, empty counterfeit BIB packaging and boxes, a benchtop sparkling wine foil applicator machine, a compressor and a large quantity of counterfeit labels.

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: *"Food fraud is a problem for the health and safety of consumers, for legitimate businesses, and for public revenue. The best way to fight fraudsters and counterfeiters is through cooperation between OLAF, Europol and national customs and police authorities. We can see the results of this approach – almost 15 million litres of illicit beverages are off the shelves."*

The eleventh edition of Operation OPSON XI was carried out worldwide from December 2021 to May 2022. More information on Operation OPSON XI is available in [Europol's press release](#).

### **OLAF mission, mandate and competences:**

OLAF's mission is to detect, investigate and stop fraud with EU funds.

OLAF fulfils its mission by:

- carrying out independent investigations into fraud and corruption involving EU funds, so as to ensure that all EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can create jobs and growth in Europe;
- contributing to strengthening citizens' trust in the EU Institutions by investigating serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU Institutions;
- developing a sound EU anti-fraud policy.

In its independent investigative function, OLAF can investigate matters relating to fraud, corruption and other offences affecting the EU financial interests concerning:

- all EU expenditure: the main spending categories are Structural Funds, agricultural policy and rural development funds, direct expenditure and external aid;
- some areas of EU revenue, mainly customs duties;

- suspicions of serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU institutions.

Once OLAF has completed its investigation, it is for the competent EU and national authorities to examine and decide on the follow-up of OLAF's recommendations. All persons concerned are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in a competent national or EU court of law.

**For further details:**

Jana CAPPELLO  
Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
Phone: +32 2 29 85549  
E-mail: [olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/anti\\_fraud](http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud)



Kirill GELMI  
Deputy Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
+32 2 29 88146  
[olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/anti\\_fraud](http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud)

