

## Illicit medicines intercepted under OLAF's lead

**The customs authorities of 14 EU countries have seized illicit hormonal substances, food supplements and medicines for erectile dysfunction in a targeted action led by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). OLAF's targeted action was part of Europol's operation SHIELD III.**

The third edition of yearly Operation SHIELD took place between April and October 2022. Europol, OLAF and the EU Member States that participated in SHIELD III targeted misused or counterfeit medicines, doping substances, illegal food or sport supplements and counterfeit COVID medical supplies.

As a part of SHIELD III, OLAF led a targeted action focused specifically on illicit and counterfeit hormonal substances, food supplements and medicines for erectile dysfunction. OLAF facilitated the cooperation and activities of customs authorities of 14 EU Member States that took part in the targeted action: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

As a result of the action, national customs authorities found various irregularities and intercepted over 430 000 tablets – mainly medicine for erectile dysfunction and hormonal supplements – and some 650 vials of various medicines.

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: *"Making profit by putting people's health in danger is horrendous, and yet unfortunately it is not the first time that OLAF deals with fraud of this kind. The best way to fight fraudsters and counterfeiters, and to protect EU citizens and their health is through cooperation between OLAF, Europol and national customs and police authorities."*

For more information on Operation SHIELD III, please see [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:**

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