

## Game over: 8000 fake toys seized during raid in Poland

**A joint raid by OLAF investigators and officers from the Masovian Customs and Tax Office (Warsaw) resulted in the seizure of 8000 counterfeit toys with an estimated value of €113,000 (PLN 535,000) from an outlet housed in a wholesale shopping centre on the outskirts of Warsaw.**

Representatives of OLAF and the Masovian Customs and Tax Service inspected last August the outlet in question where they identified thousands of suspected counterfeit items, which were marked with registered trademarks of well-known toy companies and fake CE marks, displayed throughout the premises.

Further inspections revealed that, in the back room of the outlet, workers were packaging the counterfeit toys in individual boxes for display as well as adding stickers with a bar code and fraudulent CE mark to make it appear that the toys met all EU requirements and were safe for children to use.

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: *'Fake toys can be dangerous and put our children at risk. I am pleased that OLAF could lend its expertise to our Polish colleagues in yet another successful action to keep European citizens' safe and protect legitimate businesses from fraudsters. By acting together we can stop fake and potentially hazardous goods from ending up in people's homes.'*

### **Background:**

Counterfeit toys often contain substances that are harmful to health, including phthalates, which has been repeatedly confirmed by laboratory tests. The CE marking is used to signify that products sold in the EU have been assessed to meet high safety, health, and environmental protection requirements.

In Poland, the marketing of counterfeit goods is considered a crime that is punishable with up to 5 years imprisonment.

### **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.

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