



Press Conference - Operation DIABOLO, Cologne, 20th April 2007

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the organizers for providing this opportunity to address you few words about the first participation of Romania, as a Member State, to a joint customs operation together with all customs authorities of member states of the European Union.

Operation DIABOLO was a great opportunity for Romanian customs to prove its full involvement in achieving the commitments assumed for becoming member state of the European Union. Due to the scope of the operation (maritime operation focused on sea containers), Romania was involved in it through Port Constantza, the main entrance of goods in Romania.

Relying on:

- European legal framework concerning the fight against counterfeiting and mutual assistance between administrative authorities,
- Permanent exchange of information between participating customs authorities from European ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Members, through technical infrastructure of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF),
- Improved awareness of customs officers concerning their important role in combating tobacco and cigarette smuggling, in general and counterfeit cigarettes, in particular,
- The modern tools available for our customs officers (like x-ray scanner),
- Better and faster methods for the selection of containers: risk analysis and use of electronic data bases,

National Customs Authority of Romania is able to report today an important seizure of counterfeit cigarettes (6 120 000 pieces). Of course, it is a small part of the overall quantity of cigarettes seized during the operation but, in the same time, a proof of our contribution to the general effort in combating serious threats for EU financial interests and to the health of EU consumers, represented by cigarettes smuggling and counterfeiting.

In the framework of the European actions, we consider essential to continue this type of operations, in order to improve the co-operation between all the enforcement agencies, at European and international level, as a a key factor for the protection of EU financial interests and citizens.

Florica Maria Păun
Senior adviser

National Customs Authority
Directorate for Fight Against Customs Frauds
Romania