

# News Release

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## Millions of cigarettes seized at EU's eastern borders

2020-12-08

Law enforcement authorities seized 37 millions of illegal cigarettes and more than 3.5 thousand litres of illegal fuel this month in a ten-day operation led by Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

The operation was co-led by Latvia and Finland and supported by INTERPOL, OLAF, Eurojust and Europol along with border guards, police and customs officers from Poland, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia.

The operation, known as JAD Arktos 2, took place between 16-25 November and was coordinated from the Frontex headquarters in Warsaw. It targeted excise fraud, particularly tobacco smuggling, document fraud and migrant smuggling at selected border crossing points at EU's eastern land borders

"The EU's eastern land borders have been used by organised criminal groups for smuggling excise fraud into the European Union for years. This is why it is so important to have customs take part in such operations, with their expertise and know-how," said Frontex Director Fabrice Leggeri.

The EU's eastern land borders are significantly affected by cross-border crime. Smuggling of excise goods, trafficking in stolen vehicles and the smuggling of drugs and weapons remain the most significant threats to border security. While the migration pressure at the eastern land border remains low, criminals use the borders to smuggle illegal goods into the European Union. Authorities also detect high use of fraudulent documents.

The aim of the Joint Action Day was also to enhance the cooperation between different authorities involved in the fight against cross-border crime.

Despite the restrictions due to COVID, the operation led to impressive results:

# JAD ARKTOS 2 RESULTS



**37 million cigarettes**



**1.8 tonnes of tobacco**



**3.5 thousand litres of illegal fuel**



**130 litres of alcohol**



**8 stolen vehicles**



**9 fraudulent documents**



**100 irregular migrants**



**7 migrant smugglers**

**FRONTX**

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

**EMPACT**  
Fighting crime together

The operation was coordinated under the umbrella of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) as part of the EU Policy Cycle, a four-year plan for the fight against serious and organised crime. It brings together police and law enforcement authorities of EU Member States, European agencies and international organisations to jointly strengthen Europe's borders and internal security. The results and intelligence gathered will help in ongoing and future investigations.

