

OLAF helps Dutch and Italian customs authorities seize 223.000 bottles of counterfeit shampoo

In a successful operation initiated thanks to information provided by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Dutch and Italian customs seized 223.440 bottles of counterfeit shampoo in Rotterdam and Gioia Tauro.

During joint controls, OLAF and the Dutch and Italian customs authorities discovered three containers loaded with counterfeit shampoo coming from Asia. Through coordinated action, the containers were seized in Rotterdam and Gioia Tauro in the last weeks of April 2015.

Two containers were seized directly in Rotterdam. The third one was declared in transit at the first point of entry in the EU and declared re-exported to a third country. This container was tracked and traced by OLAF and seized by the Italian customs. The container was seized because the bottles were labelled in several EU languages, but not in the language of the country of final destination. Subsequently, there was sufficient proof suggesting that the shampoo would not have been exported to the third country concerned but would have been either diverted or smuggled back into the EU.

According to applicable legislation and case law, the customs authorities cannot retain counterfeit goods in transit in the EU except if there are indications on the commodities or accompanying documents that reveal that the goods would be diverted in the EU or re-imported in contraband in the EU. The joint controls revealed that the smugglers aimed to dispatch the goods in the EU, causing large losses of tax revenues for the EU and Member States' budgets.

This case demonstrates once again that organised international fraud networks maximise their profits through smuggling counterfeit goods in Europe. Such products are potentially harmful to health since they replace genuine, safe and well-tested products by illicit and non-standard products. These international fraud networks use fiscal evasion and a modus operandi similar to that of networks engaged in the contraband of cigarettes and drugs.

OLAF's broader investigation concerning the import into the European Union of counterfeit shampoo was initiated last year on basis of information provided by the French Customs Investigation Service. Since its start, approximately 1.000.000 bottles of shampoo have been seized by the customs authorities in France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain. Furthermore, and also following information provided by OLAF, a clandestine factory of counterfeit shampoo with a production

capacity of 150.000 bottles per month was dismantled by the Spanish customs authorities in February 2015 ([See OLAF press release no. 1/2015](#)).

OLAF

The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is threefold: it protects the financial interests of the European Union by investigating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities; it detects and investigates serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties by members and staff of the EU institutions and bodies that could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings; and it supports the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, in the development and implementation of anti-fraud legislation and policies.

For further details for the press:

Alina BUREA

Spokesperson

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Phone: +32 2 295 73 36

E-mail: olaf-media@ec.europa.eu

http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud