

Important smuggling network taken out by Vaslui county border policemen; 15 persons involved in criminal activity detained

Vaslui County border policemen, under the coordination of the Bârlad City Prosecutor's Office have shut down a criminal cigarette and tobacco smuggling network, operating in the Romanian counties of Vaslui and Galați.

To this effect, the border policemen performed 51 house searches, during which relevant amounts of goods and money were seized, and 15 members of the criminal network were detained for 24 hours.

On 27 July 2017, border policemen from the Border Police Territorial Service of Vaslui County, under the coordination of the Bârlad City Prosecutor's Office carried out a series of actions to take out the above mentioned tobacco smuggling criminal network.

A total of 51 house searches were made in several towns in Vaslui and Galați County, together with 27 car searches. 135 policemen from all levels of the Border Police Territorial Inspectorate of Iași County and 40 gendarmes from the Mobile Brigade of Gendarmerie Bacău County also participated in the searches, during which 46 arrest warrants were served.

Following the searches, the policemen seized **811 packets of cigarettes** of various brands, from the Republic of Moldova and duty-free areas; **179,960 lei (€ 39,000) and €2,020 in cash; 12 cars; 1 BB gun; 16 cartridges; 61 firecrackers; 25 boxes of fireworks; 1.89 kilograms of silver; articles of clothing and footwear** suspected to be counterfeit; **laptop computers; mobile phones and SIM cards**; as well as other items and documents instrumental to the cause.

Criminal proceedings were started against 36 suspects involved, 15 of which were detained for 24 hours.

Modus operandi

An investigation was carried out between January and July 2017, gathering information about the activities of the above mentioned criminal network, under the coordination of the Bârlad City Prosecutor's Office. It was established that the persons in question acquired, transported, stored and sold cigarettes smuggled either from the Republic of Moldova or from duty-free areas – making a considerable financial profit. During the investigations the suspicion was outlined that a quantity of proximately **32,000 packets of smuggled cigarettes** were acquired/owned and sold. The investigators also noted that the criminal network members were increasingly more guarded, travelling mostly by taxi, acquiring relatively small quantities of smuggled cigarettes over short periods of time, which they rapidly distributed on the Vaslui and Galați black market, to reduce the risk of being discovered by judicial authorities.

Link:<https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/ro/main/i-retea-importanta-de-contrabanda-anihilata-de-politistii-de-frontiera-vasluieni-15-persoane-implicate-in-activitatea-infractionala-au-fost-retinute-9958.html>

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