

Over 900.000 Counterfeit Razor Blades Seized in Joint Operation by OLAF and Spanish and Italian Authorities

The European Anti-Fraud Office has participated in a joint operation with the Spanish National Police, the Spanish Tax Agency Customs Surveillance and the Italian Guardia di Finanza, where over 900.000 counterfeit razor blades of a very well-known brand have been seized in several EU countries. The operation has also led to the arrest of seven individuals in Spain and Italy and has included eight raids on the criminal network premises in both countries.

Just in Spain, over 280.000 counterfeit razor blades have been seized, with a market value of over one million euros. Within this this same investigation, a total of 644.240 counterfeit razor blades have been intercepted in other EU countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, and Italy).

OLAF's investigation began after receiving intelligence about an organisation involved in introducing counterfeit razor blades into the EU from China. OLAF tracked the suspicious shipments, identifying the recipient companies across the EU and informed the involved countries, coordinating the investigations related to this case. From that point, OLAF, Spain's Tax Agency Customs Surveillance, Spain's National Police, and Italy's Guardia di Finanza joined forces to conduct the investigation together.

Modus Operandi

The criminal network's *modus operandi* was to purchase counterfeit products from a Chinese supplier via bank transfers from Spain or Italy, presenting the transactions as legitimate commercial operations. The goods were then sent by the Chinese exporter to storage units rented by the criminal network, using intermediary companies as recipients.

Upon arrival at the storage units, the counterfeit goods were distributed to wholesalers in Spain and Italy, who sold the goods as genuine products. Consequently, the counterfeit items reached final consumers through retail stores, where their exterior appearance made them indistinguishable from genuine brand products.

The illegal activities of criminal organisations like the one investigated in this operation harm the internal EU market. They negatively impact legitimate manufacturers of genuine brands through unfair competition and lost business revenue due to the distribution of counterfeit products. Counterfeit goods also pose a serious risk to consumers, as their production process does not adhere to safety standards.

For more information on the operation, you can read [Spain's Tax Agency Customs Surveillance press release](#)

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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