



EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE

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## **11 million cigarettes seized with OLAF support during hot season**

**Smuggling does not break for the summer season and neither does the work of OLAF investigators. Indeed, in August and September, OLAF helped Member States halt several contraband operations, leading to the overall seizure of more than 11 million cigarettes and the arrest of four persons.**

In early September, an operation coordinated by OLAF allowed the Romanian Border Police to seize 5 million Toros brand "cheap white" cigarettes, which were being smuggled on-board a ship sailing under the Slovenian flag in the Black Sea. The searches carried out during the operation also led to the arrest of four individuals.

In August, OLAF intelligence enabled the Greek Customs Service at the Port of Piraeus to confiscate 6 million Royal brand cheap whites, which had been legally exported to Asia but were on their way to be smuggled back into Greece.

OLAF also helped halt smuggled cigarettes arriving into the European Union by plane. Working closely with individual Member States, several separate operations took place this summer at the airports of Venice (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal), Palma de Mallorca (Spain) and Düsseldorf (Germany), resulting in the combined seizure of 300,000 cigarettes.

OLAF's excellent collaboration with Member States and other international partners was a key element to the success of these operations.

### **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.

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