

PRESS RELEASE No 22 /2014

8 December 2014

Over 3.9 million cigarettes seized by Dutch customs with OLAF support

On 1 December 2014, on the basis of information provided to them by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Dutch customs authorities carried out a successful operation against international cigarette smugglers. The customs officials of the Belastingdienst uncovered a load of over 3.9 million cigarettes of an illegal brand.

Upon receiving information from OLAF, Dutch customs officials searched a freight vehicle registered with Lithuanian number plates in the vicinity of Eindhoven (NL). They uncovered a load of over 3.9 million cigarettes of an illegal brand. The cigarettes had allegedly been manufactured in the Republic of Belarus. The vehicle had no transport documents and part of the cigarettes had been concealed in kitchen cabinets that it was transporting. The customs officials seized the vehicle and the cigarettes.

This operation was organized in the framework of efforts coordinated by OLAF across Lithuania, Poland and The Netherlands seeking to dismantle networks of cigarette smugglers.

Background:

Cigarette smuggling causes huge yearly losses to Member States and the EU in evaded customs duties and taxes. Smuggled tobacco respects no rules, and poses great risks to both consumers and businesses. It undermines anti-smoking and public health campaigns, and violates the strict rules that the EU and Member States have on manufacturing, distribution and sale. OLAF investigates cases of customs fraud as they are financially damaging to legitimate industry and the EU taxpayer. OLAF has an explicit mandate to fight cigarette smuggling as part of the EU efforts to curb this phenomenon.

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:

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