

# Intellectual Property Crime Threat Assessment



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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## News

For the first time, Europol and the European Union Intellectual Property Office published a joint EU-wide [intellectual property \(IP\) crime threat assessment](#) analysing the emerging threats and impact of IP crime in the EU. It focuses on counterfeiting and piracy affecting the EU.

One of the key concerns outlined in the report is the growing discrepancy between the increasing number of counterfeit and pirated goods in overall world trade and the decreasing number of seizures of counterfeit items by customs authorities in the EU. The report concludes that this development is influenced by the fact that IP crime is not a top law enforcement priority, as it is often perceived as a victimless crime. At the EU level, counterfeiting was also removed as a priority from the EU Policy Cycle on Serious and Organised Crime 2017 – 2021.

In addition, counterfeiters no longer produce only fake luxury items but deal in a wide range of everyday goods, e.g., car parts, cosmetics, electronic components, food and drink, toys, etc. According to the report, today any product with a name brand can become a counterfeiting target, with significant consequences for both the economy and the health and safety of consumers.

Key product sectors for piracy are electronics, food and drink, luxury products, clothes and accessories, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, tobacco products, and vehicle parts, with China being the main source of counterfeit items for almost every type of counterfeit good. Another catalyst in the growth of counterfeit goods is the continued growth of e-commerce and global distribution possibilities offered by online marketplaces and social media marketplaces, which facilitate the trade of counterfeit items.

As regards the perpetrators, the report outlines that most criminal activity involving counterfeiting is performed by organised criminal groups that are usually also involved in other criminal activities. Lastly, the report also notes a (still very small) growing production of counterfeit goods in the EU.

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