

Joint Strike against Medicine Trafficking



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

Thomas Wahl

News

On 10 December 2020, the public was informed of the [operation “Shield”](#) carried out between March and September 2020. The operation resulted in the seizure of medicines and doping substances worth €73 million all over Europe. Nearly 700 persons were arrested, 25 organised criminal groups dismantled, 10 clandestine laboratories seized, and over 450 websites shut down. The operation was led by Finland, France, Greece and Italy and coordinated by Europol at the EU level. [OLAF contributed](#) by leading a targeted action against counterfeit and substandard oncological medicines and hormonal substances. This action discovered 58 cases of various illegal activities.

Operation “Shield” also detected COVID-19-related fakes, such as medical devices (face masks, tests, diagnosis kits), chemicals and hygiene sanitisers. Europol stressed that the operation showed new trends in trafficking of counterfeit and misused medicines. It was an unified law enforcement response to ensure public health involving 19 EU Member States and 8 non-EU countries. Operation “Shield” followed-up other previous successful actions against the trafficking of counterfeit medicines and doping substances.

AUTHOR

Thomas Wahl

Senior Researcher
Max Planck Institute for the
Study of Crime, Security and
Law

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