

New Edition of Global Operation against Medicine Trafficking



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News

On 14 December 2021, Europol and OLAF informed the public of the [second edition of operation “SHIELD”](#) that was carried out between April and mid-October 2021 (for the first edition → [eucri](#)m news of 20 January 2021). Operation “SHIELD II” targeted criminal groups that traffic misused or counterfeit doping substances and medicines, e.g. COVID-19 vaccines, anti-cancer drugs, erectile dysfunction medicines, pseudoephedrine, painkillers, antioestrogens, antivirals, etc. The operation was led by Europol and the French, Hellenic and Italian police forces. It involved 20 EU Member States, seven non-EU countries (including Columbia and the United States), OLAF, the World Anti-Doping Agency and private companies.

Operation Shield II resulted, *inter alia*, in the seizure of 25 million units of medicines and doping substances worth nearly €63 million, the disclosure of five illegal labs, the shutdown of over 280 websites and the arrest of 544 suspects. Performance enhancing drugs and “corona-cures” were at the top of the seizures list, while the amount of COVID-19-related medicinal trafficking has significantly decreased compared to the first edition of operation Shield in 2020.

Europol supported the investigation with operational coordination and analysis. [OLAF facilitated](#) the cooperation and activities of customs and police authorities and led targeted actions. Europol’s Executive Director *Catherine De Bolle*, and OLAF Director-General *Ville Itälä* stressed that it is worrying to see how criminals put people’s health at risk in order to make profits. Due to close cooperation and good coordination, the EU bodies and national law enforcement authorities, however, were again successful in protecting the consumers’ health, public revenues and legitimate business, they said.

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