

OLAF Helps Greek Authorities Seize Nearly 10 Million Contraband Cigarettes



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

News

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At the end of May 2021, Greek authorities succeeded in seizing almost 10 million contraband cigarettes. The cigarettes were smuggled from China in suitcases. The action prevented the loss of around €2 million in excise duties and VAT. **OLAF supported the operation** by alerting the Greek authorities when it identified the suspicious shipment. OLAF also closely cooperated with the Chinese Anti-Smuggling Bureau which tipped off the EU body. Cigarette smuggling remains one of the major threats to the EU budget. In 2020 alone, international operations involving OLAF led to the seizure of nearly 370 million illegal cigarettes that would have caused losses of around €74 million in customs and excise duties and VAT to EU and Member State budgets (→ [euclid 1/2021, 14](#)).

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