

OLAF Supports Seizure of Smuggled Cigarettes



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News

The Italian Guardia di Finanza caught a consignment of nearly 55,000 cigarettes destined for entry into the EU black market in a seizure coordinated by OLAF. OLAF received information from Turkish Customs about a suspicious convoy with a significant quantity of cigarettes, which was to be delivered to a Spanish company in the Canary Islands. With the support of the Spanish authorities, OLAF collected evidence that a criminal organisation was behind the company; it operated using fictitious companies in Italy and other countries so that moves of the consignment were hidden. The real purpose was to smuggle cigarettes into the EU without paying customs duties and taxes. On 8 May 2020, the Guardia di Finanza seized the cigarettes at the port of Trieste. It is estimated that the EU would have lost a total of around €11 million in unpaid customs duties. OLAF Director-General, Ville Itälä, highlighted that the operation is a concrete example of how important co-operation among Member States and OLAF's established partnerships with third countries are in order to successfully protect the EU's financial interests.

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