

# OLAF's Operational Work January- July 2025



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**News**

This news item highlights key cases that demonstrate OLAF's operational work in the first seven months of 2025. It follows reports on operations supported by OLAF in the second half of 2024 (→[eucri](#)m 4/2024, 275-276). As OLAF and the EPPO have increasingly reported on their close operational cooperation in specific cases, a separate overview is dedicated to this cooperation (→related link). The following overview is in reverse chronological order.

- 18 July 2025: OLAF report on its assistance of a major law enforcement operation in Ukraine. As an outcome of a joint investigation team between Romania, Ukraine and OLAF with the support of Eurojust, Ukrainian authorities were able to [crack down on a sophisticated criminal network involved in the illegal mass production of pesticides](#) and other agrochemical products which were sold in the EU under the false label of leading European and US chemical companies. Seizures included hundreds of tons of illicit products worth over 2.3 million. OLAF delivered strategic gathering, analysis and sharing of intelligence as well as cross-border coordination that led to the setting up of the JIT. Investigations already started in 2023 with a seemingly isolated seizure of illicit pesticides in Bulgaria. The JIT revealed that the dimension is much bigger and the criminal network can be traced to Ukraine.
- 3/4 June 2025: Upon coordination by OLAF, law enforcement authorities in Romania and Italy [dismantle a large-scale cigarette smuggling network](#). The network operated illegal facilities in Romania and Italy for the production of counterfeit cigarettes and other tobacco products destined for distribution across the EU. The law enforcement operation leads to the seizure of approximately 25 million cigarettes in Romania and of 14 tonnes of counterfeit cigarettes, more than 10 tonnes of unprocessed tobacco, and a large quantity of packaging materials in Italy; six suspects are arrested. The estimated evaded duties amount to €9.8 million.
- 20 May 2025: In an OLAF-led [action targeting e-commerce warehouses across Europe](#), Irish customs authorities seize over 4000 electric bikes and a number of e-scooters worth €4,5 million that have been illegally imported into the EU. The estimated loss in customs duties is €2.3 million. OLAF supported the action by providing evidence on fraud techniques and methods of evasion, such as false declarations of goods, unauthorised removal from customs transit procedures, and fabricated claims that goods had left the EU.
- 2 May 2025: OLAF sums up the results of a [major operation targeting the smuggling of high-quality counterfeit designer clothing](#), footwear and accessories into the European Union. The counterfeit goods usually come from Turkish ports with destination to EU countries. This was also the case when officials of the Italian Customs and Monopolies Agency and the Guardia di Finanza seize almost one

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million items of clothing and accessories of international fashion at the port of Trieste. Despite this record seizure of counterfeit textiles, OLAF points out that over 1.8 million counterfeit items, with an estimated market value exceeding €180 million, have been seized since the opening of the inquiry in 2024.

- 30 April 2025: OLAF and Polish authorities [dismantle a complex large-scale VAT evasion scheme](#). The joint action leads to the arrest of four individuals and searches at 50 locations across Poland. An organised crime group operating with a number of shell companies in different countries exploited the so-called "customs procedure 42" – a special EU VAT exemption mechanism that allows businesses to import goods into one EU country without paying import VAT, provided those goods are immediately shipped to another EU Member State. The perpetrators pretended to have followed this rule, thus profiting from VAT suspension; in reality, goods were transported back to Poland and stored in warehouses there; finally, the goods were illicitly distributed across the EU.
- 25 April 2025: Thank to OLAF intelligence, Spanish law enforcement authorities [put off fake and sub-standard sportswear from the EU market](#). The coordinated action results in the seizure of 59 boxes containing goods with a market value of approximately €570,000. The sportswear was seemingly intended to be sold in connection with the Copa del Rey football final taking place in Spain on 26 April. OLAF is stepping up its efforts to combat counterfeit sports products that do not comply with EU safety regulations and pose a threat to public health.
- 10 April 2025: OLAF investigators and Lithuanian Customs Criminal Service officials successfully [raid a company that is suspected of violating EU sanctions](#). The company is accused of circumventing EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus by rerouting goods through Central Asian countries when the final destination was actually Russia and Belarus. OLAF provided intelligence and analytical support as well as relevant data during the investigation. It is pointed out that such operations are crucial in combating the circumvention of EU sanctions, and can assist other countries in identifying export routes and tracing the final destination of goods.
- 18 February 2025: OLAF reports on the results of a [major procurement fraud in Poland](#). OLAF investigations, which started in 2023 and were concluded in 2024, revealed that public procurement processes for the purchase and delivery of power generators to areas in Ukraine affected by power shortages were affected by several irregularities. The EU project management authority, Poland's Government Agency for Strategic Reserves (RARS), violated transparency, competition, equal treatment, and financial management principles. In its final report, OLAF recommend the recovery of over €91 million.
- 30 January 2025: OLAF and Europol inform the public of [operation SHIELD V](#). Operation SHIELD V was carried out between April and November 2024 targeting misused or counterfeit medicines, doping substances, illegal food or sport supplements and counterfeit COVID medical supplies (for previous SHIELD operations →[eucrim 1/2024, 18](#) and →[eucrim 4/2022, 234–235](#)). The fifth edition of the SHIELD operation [resulted in](#) the arrest of 418 individuals, the dismantling of 4 underground labs, and seizures worth over €11.1 million, including: 426,016 illegal packages of illegal pharmaceuticals; 4,111 kilograms of powder and raw material; 108 litres of active ingredient; 174,968 vials and ampoules; and over 4.6 million tablets and pills. The operation involved law enforcement, judicial, customs, medical and anti-doping authorities from 30 countries. Europol and OLAF call attention to the fact that pharmaceutical crime is a growing threat in the EU having direct impact on public health and safety (see also the recent Europol report on pharmaceutical crime in the EU →[eucrim 1/2025, 26-27](#)).
- 29 January 2025: OLAF announces a [major strike against a criminal network that massively smuggled cigarettes](#) into the EU. The estimated tax loss is around €550 million. According to the investigations, the criminal network produced cigarettes in licensed manufacturing facilities in Türkiye and Iran. They were then exported to overseas ports and later shipped to EU Member States, where they were sold. The smuggled goods were concealed in over 150 overseas containers under false product descrip-

tions and with fictitious consignees and customs declarations. A joint operation involving next to OLAF and Eurojust, customs authorities in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, led to the arrest of 10 persons and 15 searches. Investigation into the criminal network already began in 2020 when Belgian customs authorities identified suspicious container shipments from Belgium to Hanover, Germany.

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