

# Operation OPSON X: Over 15.000 Tonnes of Illegal Food and Beverages Taken off the Market

## News

Thomas Wahl

On 22 July 2021, Europol, Interpol and OLAF reported on the successes of operation “OPSON X”. This operation, which is carried out each year, targets trafficking of counterfeit and substandard food and beverage. For operations in previous years →[eucrim 2/2020, 80](#) and [eucrim 2/2019, 90](#). The meanwhile tenth operation of this kind was carried out from December 2020 to June 2021 and involved law enforcement authorities in 72 countries (including 26 EU Member States). In total, 15,451 tonnes of illicit products with a value of about €53.8 million were seized; about 68 000 checks were carried out, 663 arrest warrants issued, 2,409 locations searched, and 42 criminal networks disrupted.

OLAF mainly supported actions against counterfeit and substandard beverages. The Office coordinated actions in 19 EU Member States and three non-EU countries. As a result, law enforcement authorities seized more than 1.7 million litres of wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages. Not only fiscal infringements but also food safety violations were reported. *Catherine De Bolle*, Europol’s Executive Director, and *Ville Itälä*, OLAF’s Director-General, stressed that illicit trade with food and beverages does not only harm the economic interests of the EU, but also pose a real health risk to European consumers. Interpol Secretary General *Jürgen Stock* pointed out that operation OPSON demonstrates the massive profits food crime can generate which can then fund other organised crime activities.

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Published in  
2021, Vol. 16(3) eucrim p 143

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://eucrim.eu>

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The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



Co-funded by  
the European Union