

Operation “Postbox II”: First Customs-Led Cyber Patrol in Europe



Thomas Wahl

News

OLAF reported on a significant strike against online criminals trafficking drugs, counterfeit goods, and endangered animal and plant species. Led by OLAF and the Belgian customs service, the operation codenamed “Postbox II” involved customs services from 22 Member States and Europol. It was the first cyber patrol in Europe that was carried out mainly by customs services. The results of the operation were presented by OLAF Director *Ernesto Bianchi* at a [press conference at Brussel Airport](#) on 21 May 2019.

The joint customs operation led to 2320 seizures, the opening of 50 case files, and the identification of 30 suspects in Member States. OLAF provided, *inter alia*, assistance by means of its Virtual Operation Coordination Unit, a secure communication system facilitating intelligence exchange in real-time.

Experts raided the cyberspace, i.e., open web, dark net and social media sites, in search of the perpetrators of crime. They used special software and techniques to unveil the sellers’ anonymity.

The operation revealed that most counterfeit goods sold had been processed via Asian e-commerce platforms. Drug trafficking mainly takes place through the Dark Web, which allows buyers and sellers to retain their anonymity.

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