

Operation Silver Axe VI against Illegal Pesticides



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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News

On 17 June 2021, [OLAF and Europol reported](#) on the results of the annual operation “Silver Axe”. The operation, which was coordinated meanwhile for the sixth time, targets the global trade in counterfeit and illegal pesticides. Pesticides are among the most regulated products in the world, thus cheaper illegal and substandard products promise high profits but they can heavily damage the environment.

Operation Silver Axe VI (carried out between mid-January and end of April 2021) led to 12 arrests and the seizure of over 1200 tonnes of illegal pesticides in total. It is estimated that the seized products are worth €80 million. Law enforcement authorities targeted the sale of counterfeits, banned products and unregulated imports – both online and offline. Inspections on land and sea borders, inland marketplaces, parcel service providers and online marketplaces were carried out. [Europol reported](#) that the operation showed a trend towards increased online sales. Asian countries remain the main source of illegal pesticides production. The operation involved 35 countries and several supranational institutions, such as the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA). OLAF mainly provided expertise in identifying and tracking suspicious movements. These movements are then reported to national customs and plant protection authorities which are able to intercept the suspicious transfers of goods.

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