

Outcomes of Operation LUDUS

Thomas Wahl

News

On 27 November 2025, Europol, OLAF and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) announced the results of the [law enforcement operation LUDUS V](#). LUDUS is an annual law enforcement operation that focuses on preventing the distribution of fake and unsafe toys in the EU market (for previous editions →[eucriM 2/2023, 122](#); →[eucriM 1/2022, 28](#); →[eucriM 1/2021, 13](#)).

The fifth edition of the operation that was carried out between 2024 and 2025 resulted in the coordinated seizure of 4.2 million counterfeit toys infringing intellectual property rights and 3.6 million unsafe toys posing potential safety hazards. 86 persons were reported to judicial authorities.

[OLAF coordinated](#) actions of customs authorities in 13 EU Member States and involved rights holders that contributed to the success of the operation.

The [EUIPO provided logistical support](#) and facilitated collaboration between rights holders from the private sector and enforcement authorities through the [Intellectual Property Enforcement Portal \(IPEP\)](#).

Europol played a major role in planing the various phases of the operation.

With regard to [operation LUDUS IV](#) (carried out between 2023 and 2024), OLAF reported that around 500,000 toys were seized, including dolls, plush toys, board games, and video game consoles. The value of the seized goods was estimated at €2 million.

The information about the results of operation LUDUS V and IV comes along with a separate Europol report, which provides an overview of the outcomes of the LUDUS iterations over the last five years (2020-2025). According to the [report entitled "Cheating the Toy World"](#), the five editions of LUDUS achieved the following operational results:

- Nearly 50 million illicit toys, valued at almost €150 million were seized;
- Nearly 27,700 law enforcement inspections were carried out;
- 417 individuals were reported to judicial authorities and 31 were arrested;
- Between 18 and 29 countries have engaged in the enforcement actions.

Europol emphasised that counterfeiters profit from the high demand for low-priced toys. Major trends observed during the LUDUS operations include:

- Counterfeiters often operate from outside the EU, which poses a challenge to EU law enforcement efforts;

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- Crimes are predominantly facilitated by online commerce, whereby commerce via social media platforms have become a primary channel for counterfeiters to advertise illicit toys;
- Perpetrators mainly exploit the digitalisation of society and technological innovations, such as 3D printing and AI-driven marketing;
- Social commerce and small parcel distribution continue to pose significant challenges to detection and traceability.

Europol concluded that EU law enforcement will continue to prioritise the fight against the dangerous trade in counterfeit toys and the criminal actors behind it. Sustained operational activity, targeted monitoring and effective intelligence sharing among stakeholders remain essential to prevent and detect IP crime.

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