

# “Pirates 3” Targets Border Smuggling



**Cornelia Riehle**

## News

On 12 December 2025, Frontex informed the public about the [Joint Action Days “Pirates 3”](#): a large-scale, intelligence-led operation conducted at the EU’s external borders, targeting organised criminal networks smuggling people and illicit goods. The operation took place between 6 and 17 October 2025; Frontex, Europol, and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) supported national law enforcement authorities from more than 10 countries.

The coordinated action resulted in the detection of 64 cases of irregular border crossings and the seizure of 261 falsified or fraudulent travel and identity documents, including passports, ID cards, residence permits, and driving licences. Authorities also intercepted more than 420,000 counterfeit items spanning textiles, footwear, cosmetics, electronics, toys, and automotive parts.

The numbers underscore the continued scale of cross-border IP infringement: Significant excise and financial crime outcomes were recorded, with over 17.5 million cigarettes and 6500 e-cigarettes seized, alongside €1.156 million in undeclared cash. Enforcement activity was further extended to narcotics and weapons trafficking, resulting in the seizure of 1,698 kg of marijuana, 1.2 kg of methamphetamine, 148 pistols, 179 magazines, and 122 cartridges. Additional undeclared goods included pharmaceutical products, luxury watches, and foodstuffs.

The Joint Action Days “Pirates 3” took place within the framework of EMPACT – the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats. It prioritises the fight against the most important threats posed by serious and organised international crime affecting the EU (→[eucrim 2/2025, 142](#)).

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