

Customs Union: Fake and potentially dangerous goods worth nearly €740 million stopped at EU customs in 2018

New figures released by the European Commission today show that the number of interceptions of fake goods being imported into the EU increased in 2018 due to a large amount of small parcels in express and postal traffic. Detention figures for seized consignments jumped from 57,433 in 2017 to 69,354 in 2018, though the total amount of articles detained decreased compared to previous years. Almost 27 million articles that infringed on intellectual property rights (IPR) were detained in 2018 with a street value of nearly €740 million.

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs said: *“Customs officers across the EU have seen success in tracking down and seizing counterfeit goods that are often dangerous for consumers. Their job is made even more difficult by the rise in small packages entering the EU through online sales. Protecting the integrity of our Single Market and Customs Union, and effective enforcement of intellectual property rights in the international supply chain are also priorities. We need to continue stepping up the efforts against counterfeiting and piracy.”*

The top categories of detained articles were cigarettes, which accounted for 15% of the overall amount of detained articles. This was followed by toys (14%), packaging material (9%), labels, tags and stickers (9%) and clothing (8%). Products for daily personal use in the home such as body care articles, medicines, toys and electrical household goods accounted for nearly 37% of the total number of detained articles.

China continued to be the main source country for goods infringing intellectual property rights. North Macedonia was the main provenance for counterfeit alcoholic beverages. Turkey was the top source for other beverages, perfumes and cosmetics. EU customs saw a high number of fake watches, mobile phones and accessories, ink cartridges and toners, CDs/DVDs, labels, tags and stickers from Hong Kong, China. The main source for computer equipment was India, Cambodia for cigarettes and Bosnia and Herzegovina for packaging material.

Background

Over the past 50 years, the Customs Union has developed into a cornerstone of our Single Market, keeping EU borders safe and protecting our citizens from prohibited and dangerous goods such as weapons, drugs and counterfeit products.

The Commission's report on customs actions to enforce IPR has been issued annually since 2000 and is based on data transmitted by Member States'

customs administrations to the Commission.

The data provides valuable information, which supports the analysis of intellectual property rights infringements and helps other institutions such as the European Union Intellectual Property Office and the OECD to map economic data and the most common routes for counterfeiters.

In November 2017, the Commission adopted a comprehensive package of measures to further improve the application and enforcement of intellectual property rights and step up the efforts against counterfeiting and piracy. This was followed, in 2018, by a new EU Customs Action Plan to combat intellectual property right infringements covering the years 2018-2022, now adopted by the Council.

A further complementary report is being published by the European Union Intellectual Property Office's (EUIPO's) Observatory today: the "[Report on EU enforcement of IPRs: results at EU borders and in Member States covering the period 2013-2017](#)". This report, also based on DG TAXUD data, complements the trends report on border detentions over the past years with data on detentions by national enforcement authorities in the internal market.

[A previous study](#) has also shown that direct sales losses for EU businesses due to counterfeit goods amount to €56 billion per year, corresponding to an employment loss of almost 468,000 jobs. Adding in knock-on effects on other sectors, total sales losses amount to €92 billion.

For more information

The full report is available [here](#).

The factsheet is available [here](#).

The EUIPO Report on EU enforcement of IPRs: results at EU borders and in MSs covering the period 2013-2017 Is available [here](#).