

# [#EUBeachCleanUp: EU organises record number of cleaning actions worldwide](#)

On beaches across Europe and the world, EU staff are joining hands with local communities to clean up marine litter as part of the #EUBeachCleanUp campaign. Launched on 19 August, this year's campaign will run through October, culminating on Saturday 21 September, the International Coastal CleanUp Day, with actions taking place in over 80 countries, on all inhabited continents.

This year, thanks to innovative partnerships with the United Nations and the Smurfs, the campaign reaches thousands of citizens of all ages. The success of #EUBeachCleanUp relies on its combination of awareness-raising – with a powerful social media presence – and very concrete call to action: come and join us at your beach!

Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella** is proud of the campaign and invites everyone to participate:

*"The European Union has some of the most ambitious policies to fight marine pollution in the world. Together with the United Nations, we want our oceans to be cleaner and healthier – in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14. This year, we have a new partner: the Smurfs. Blue, brave and with an exceptional appeal to young and old, they are the ideal partners of our campaign. Join our events and help us build a global wave of ocean activism!"*

The many #EUBeachCleanUp events, happening in the coming weeks, will each bring tons of litter from seas and shores to local waste management facilities. The events are organised by EU embassies and UN offices across the world, jointly with local authorities, schools, NGOs and private companies. Through the campaign, the EU and partners want to engage the public and raise awareness, particularly among children and youth. When picking up litter from the beach, people will recognize many single use items: cotton buds, straws, plastic bags or cutlery... Being part of the event can spur long-term behavioural change.

Every year, 8 million tons of plastic litter are dumped into the sea and beach clean-ups, will not alone solve this massive challenge. Prevention is key. That is why the EU has adopted a [European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy](#) along with legislative measures to reduce the production and consumption of the 10 single-use plastic items most commonly found in marine litter.

**More information**

[#EUBeachCleanUp list of events](#)

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## 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](#).

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## **[EASO and Cyprus sign Hosting Agreement](#)**

### ***Support for Cypriot authorities continues to be scaled-up***

On 19 September 2019, the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), **Nina Gregori**, and the Minister of Interior of Cyprus, **Constantinos Petrides**, signed a Hosting Agreement in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Agreement gives legal clarity to the status of EASO in the country, including that of its staff and its personnel, thus allowing the Agency to be better able to support the asylum authorities of Cyprus. Commenting on the

Agreement, Ms Gregori thanked Minister Petrides and the Cypriot authorities for the constructive approach to the negotiations and commitment to finalising the Agreement as quickly as possible.

Ms **Gregori** stated: *“The very evident goodwill and genuine constructive approach to concluding this Hosting Agreement is a real testament to the excellent cooperation between EASO and Cyprus. The Cypriot asylum authorities have been under significant pressures and have demonstrated a true European approach to managing these. EASO has been – and continues to – quickly ramp-up its support for the country with full commitment. Today’s Agreement will allow us to maximise the use of EASO’s tools in order to continue providing even more tangible support.”*

In response to the increased pressures on the Cypriot authorities, EASO has been expanding the technical and operational assistance it has been providing to the country since 2014. In December 2018, a new [Operating Plan](#) was signed with Cyprus to further bolster EASO’s assistance in light of a recent surge in asylum applications.

Specifically, the Agency is supporting the Cypriot Authorities with the registration of applications for international protection and in improving reception conditions, not only in the accommodation centre in Kofinou but also in the newly established first reception centre in Kokkinotrimithia. EASO is also increasing its capacity to stabilize and reduce the backlog of pending cases. Under the new Operating Plan, EASO is also supporting the Cypriot authorities in the area of data management and coordination.

EASO also hopes that the processes of arranging Hosting Agreements with Greece and Italy will be concluded as soon as possible.

**Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: [press@easo.europa.eu](mailto:press@easo.europa.eu)**

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## **[Eurojust helps unravel massive trans-European pay-TV fraud](#)**

[BG](#) | [DE](#) | [EL](#) | [FR](#) | [IT](#) | [NL](#)



□ The Hague, 18 September 2019

**A multi-country action day coordinated by Eurojust in The Hague led to the dismantling of an international criminal network committing massive fraud with pay-TV, which shows organised crime expanding its illegal activities to**

large-scale violations of audiovisual copyright. The actions taken in this unique case in the European Union are the result of complex investigations conducted by prosecutors from Naples and Rome, with the support of judicial and police authorities from Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, France, and the Netherlands, as well as Eurojust. The damage caused by the criminal gang amounts to approximately €6.5 million, jeopardising the existence of many legal providers of pay-TV on the market. More than 200 servers were taken offline in Germany, France and the Netherlands, and over 150 *PayPal* accounts of the criminals were blocked. Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, set up its 100th coordination centre, since the first in 2011, to support on the spot the national authorities in swiftly disrupting the illicit activities. Today's simultaneous operation led to the disruption of the signal for illegal pay-TV viewers in Europe, who benefitted from a subscription fee far below market value.

A press conference on the case was held at Eurojust today at 12:00. A link to the recording of the press conference is available [here](#).

## **OUTCOME OF THE CROSS-BORDER INVESTIGATIONS**

- A complex and very technical investigation into the organised crime group (OCG) was conducted by the Public Prosecutor Office (PPO) of Naples, supported by the *Nucleo Speciale Tutela Privacy e Frodi Tecnologiche della Guardia di Finanza di Roma*.
- Due to the transborder dimension of the criminal activities, a case was opened at Eurojust to advance the Italian investigation. A link was also discovered with another investigation conducted by the PPO of Rome, which was supported by the *Polizia di Stato – Servizio Polizia Postale e delle Comunicazioni – Sezione Financial Cybercrime*.
- Eurojust ensured quick information exchange with the other Member States involved, as well as the proper and fast execution of judicial orders, including several European Investigation Orders and freezing orders. During the action day, evidence, including servers, digital equipment, payment instruments, record sheets and other infrastructure (*Load Balance*) were seized. A total number of 22 suspects of different nationalities were identified.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE CRIMINAL NETWORK**

In 2015, the OCG started illegally re-broadcasting and selling pay-per-view products and services, similar to the ones offered by *Sky Italia*, *Mediaset Premium*, *Netflix*, *Dazon*, and *Infinity* in various Member States and third countries. The well-skilled criminals used the most sophisticated and efficient software for the fraud. Several retransmission stations were set up with special servers to disable the encryption of the original programmes and generate the illegal IPTV signal in violation of intellectual property law. The gang members offered to a wide audience of unknowing clients actual pay-tv programmes, cinematographic works and on-demand content at a very low price. The illegally obtained assets were subsequently transferred to foreign bank accounts.

The members of the OCG are suspected of having committed large-scale fraud,

cybercrime and money laundering.



Photos: © Polizia di Stato (IT)

## **NATIONAL AUTHORITIES**

The following national authorities, among others, were involved in the investigations and the joint action day coordinated by EUROJUST:

### **Italy**

- PPO of Naples
- PPO of Rome
- State Police – *Servizio Polizia Postale e delle Comunicazioni – Sezione Financial Cybercrime*
- *Nucleo Speciale Tutela Privacy e Frodi Tecnologiche della Guardia di Finanza di Roma*

### **Greece**

- Extradition and mutual legal assistance (MLA) Office of the Appeals PPO of Athens
- MLA Office of the Court of First Instance of Athens
- First Instance PPO of Athens
- Court of First Instance of Thessaloniki
- First Instance PPO of Thessaloniki
- Hellenic Police – Cybercrime Division
- Hellenic Police – Northern Greece Cybercrime Subdivision

### **Bulgaria**

- PPO of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria

### **France**

- *Direction Régionale de la Police Judiciaire de Lille*
- *Parquet du Tribunal de Grande Instance de Lille*

### **Germany**

- General Prosecutor's Office of Frankfurt am Main – *Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung der Internetkriminalität*
- PPO of Wuppertal
- Hessian State Police

### **The Netherlands**

- International Cooperation Unit (IRC) of the PPO of The Hague and the National Police, The Hague

SEE ALSO :

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