

Major seizures of hazardous toys by EU customs authorities under OLAF's lead

More than 7.8 million counterfeit and dangerous toys have been seized by customs authorities across 13 EU Member States during operations coordinated by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). OLAF's work was carried out within Operation LUDUS V, a Europol-led Joint Customs and Police Operation targeting the trafficking of illicit toys into the European Union

LUDUS is an annual operation that focuses on preventing the distribution of fake and unsafe toys in the EU market. In LUDUS V, OLAF played a key role by coordinating efforts among customs authorities from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Hungary, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden, as well as Italy's Guardia di Finanza.

With the additional support of rights holders, the coordinated action led to the seizure of over 7.8 million items in total, including 4.2 million counterfeit toys infringing intellectual property rights, and 3.6 million unsafe toys posing potential safety hazards.

The toys seized ranged from building bricks, dolls, plush toys, board games, puzzles, toy cars, school supplies, and creative kits, to outdoor and educational games, many of which were intended for young children.

“These results highlight the scale of the threat posed by counterfeit and unsafe toys,” said OLAF Acting Director-General Salla Saastamoinen. “Through close cooperation with Member States’ authorities and the valued support of rights holders, OLAF helps to protect children and families across the EU. Our participation in Operation LUDUS underscores our continued commitment to strengthening consumer safety, protecting legitimate businesses and defending the EU’s financial and economic interests.”

For more information about Operation LUDUS V, please see [Europol’s press release](#). Check also Europol’s latest report [‘Cheating the toy world: Operation LUDUS \(2020-2025\): Findings on the distribution and dangers of counterfeit toys’](#).

OLAF mission, mandate and competences:

OLAF's mission is to detect, investigate and stop wrongdoings related to EU funds.

OLAF fulfils its mission by:

- carrying out independent investigations into fraud and corruption involving EU funds, so as to ensure that all EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can create jobs and growth in Europe;
- contributing to strengthening citizens' trust in the EU Institutions by investigating serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU Institutions;
- developing a sound EU anti-fraud policy.

In its independent investigative function, OLAF can investigate matters relating to fraud, corruption and other offences affecting the EU financial interests concerning:

- all EU expenditure: the main spending categories are Structural Funds, agricultural policy and rural development funds, direct expenditure and external aid;
- some areas of EU revenue, mainly customs duties;
- suspicions of serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU institutions.

Once OLAF has completed its investigation, it is for the competent EU and national authorities to examine and decide on the follow-up of OLAF's recommendations. All persons concerned are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in a competent national or EU court of law.

For further details:

Pierluigi CATERINO

Spokesperson

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Phone: +32 2 29 52335

E-mail: olaf-media@ec.europa.eu

<https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu>

 [European Anti-Fraud Office](#)

 [European Anti-Fraud Office](#)

 [@EUAntiFraud](#)