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[Olaf Press Release 13/2014] 31 July 2014 - Polish customs have seized 21 tonnes of counterfeit and illicit pesticides, following key information provided by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). According to the analysis carried out by the Polish State Plant Health and Seeds Inspection Service, the seized products contained unregistered or illegal active ingredients that could be potentially dangerous for health. The successful operation was the result of cooperation between OLAF, Polish authorities and legitimate right-holders. The Director-General of OLAF, Mr Giovanni Kessler said: "The smuggling of counterfeit pesticides poses a threat to the food chain, to farmers and ultimately to consumers because it allows dangerous products to reach the market. Smuggling occurs through complex contraband operations run by criminal networks. It is very difficult for a single authority to intercept such international smugglers. OLAF brings added value by providing our operational partners with key information on the movement of smuggled goods across the EU. I congratulate the Polish customs on this success." OLAF's mandate includes investigations related to counterfeit goods that enter the EU through its external borders. The trade of such products generates vast illicit profits and huge losses of tax revenues.

On 16 May 2014, OLAF received information that containers loaded with 21 tonnes of pesticide coming from China were discharged in the port of Odessa (Ukraine). The goods were re-loaded onto trucks with a destination in Poland. An investigation carried out by OLAF revealed that the importer was not registered to trade such products in Poland. This is why OLAF decided to track and trace this shipment on its journey and informed Polish Customs that the shipment containing suspected counterfeit and/or illicit pesticide would cross the Ukrainian-Polish border. On 19 May 2014, Polish customs authorities intercepted the shipment at the customs checkpoint in Dorohusk. They discovered 10.5 tonnes of pesticides not authorised for the EU market as well as 10.5 tonnes of insecticide in cans without labels, but packed in boxes bearing brands of well-known pesticide producers. This infringed the intellectual property rights of the right-holders of registered trademarks in the EU. The Polish Plant Protection Authorities and the companies concerned carried out an analysis of the seized products. This revealed that the chemicals contained unregistered or illegal active ingredients that could be potentially dangerous for health.

The Polish judicial authorities have initiated a criminal investigation.

See also the European Commission's press release on seized counterfeit goods in 2013:

"Protecting Intellectual Property Rights: Customs authorities detain nearly 36 million fake goods at EU borders in 2013"

OLAF

The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is threefold: it protects the financial interests of the European Union by investigating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities; it detects and investigates serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties by members and staff of the EU institutions and bodies that could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings; and it supports the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, in the development and implementation of anti-fraud legislation and policies.