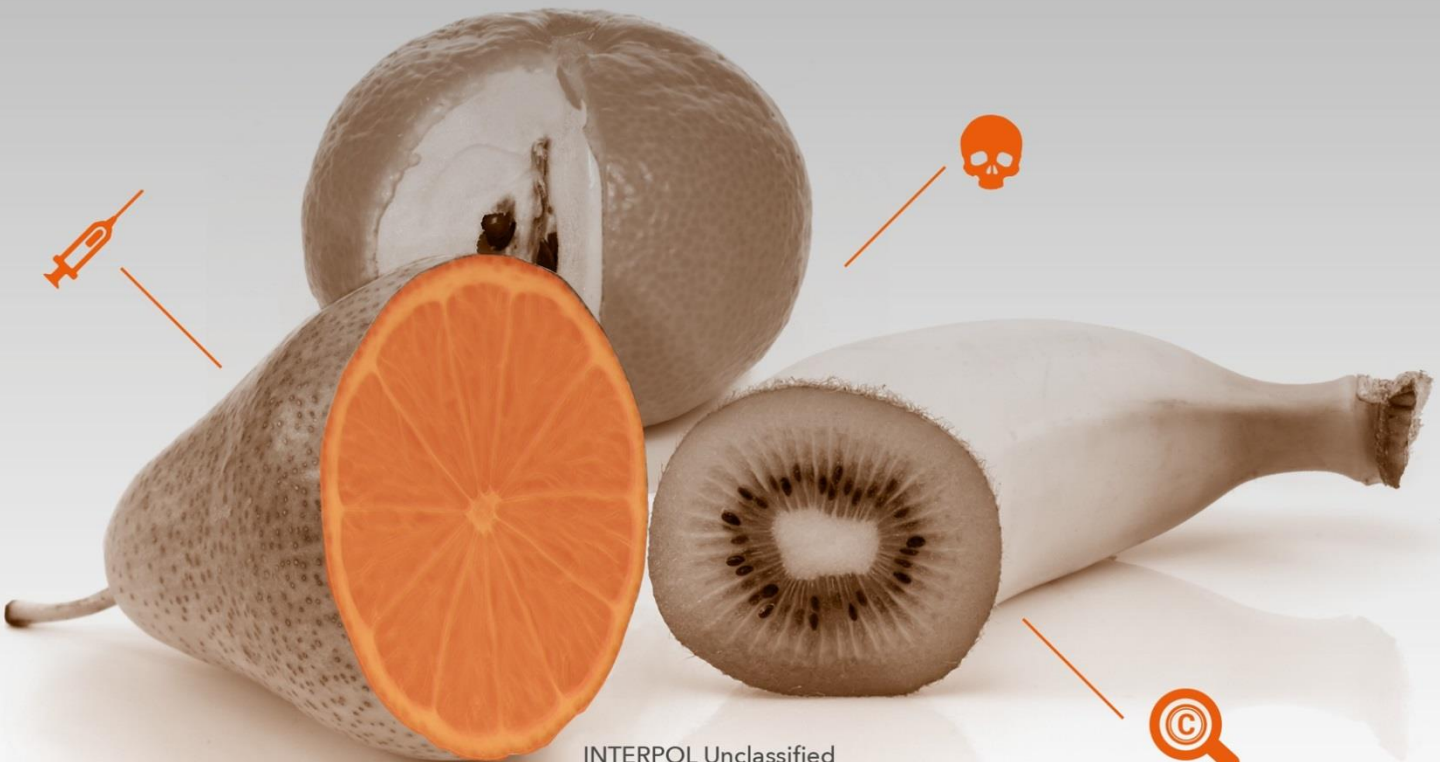




OPERATION OPSON VI

TARGETING COUNTERFEIT AND SUBSTANDARD
FOODSTUFF AND BEVERAGE

DECEMBER 2016 - MARCH 2017



INTERPOL Unclassified
Europol Unclassified - Basic Protection Level
Public Version

Table of Contents

KEY ELEMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	5
SCOPE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK	6
1.1 SCOPE	6
1.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
PARTICIPANTS	7
2.1 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES, EUROPOL AND INTERPOL.....	7
2.2 PRIVATE PARTNERS	8
SCHEDULE OF THE OPERATION	9
3.1 PREPARATORY PHASE	9
3.2 OPERATIONAL PHASE.....	10
3.3 POST OPERATIONAL PHASE	10
RESULTS OF THE OPERATIONAL PHASE	10
4.1 RESULTS RECEIVED AND ELABORATION OF THE STATISTICS	10
4.2 SEIZURES, CHECKS AND INVESTIGATIONS	11
4.2.1 Overall figures	11
4.2.2 Seized quantities and categories of products	11
4.2.3 Types of infringements.....	19
4.2.4 Side seizures	20
4.2.5 Targeted Activities.....	21
4.2.6 Organised Crime Groups dismantled	21
4.3 CASE EXAMPLES	21
4.3.1 Africa	21
4.3.2 Americas	25
4.3.3 Asia-Pacific region	27
4.3.4 Europe	28
COMMUNICATION POLICY	32

EVALUATION OF OPSON VI..... 32

 6.1 ACHIEVEMENTS 32

 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS 32

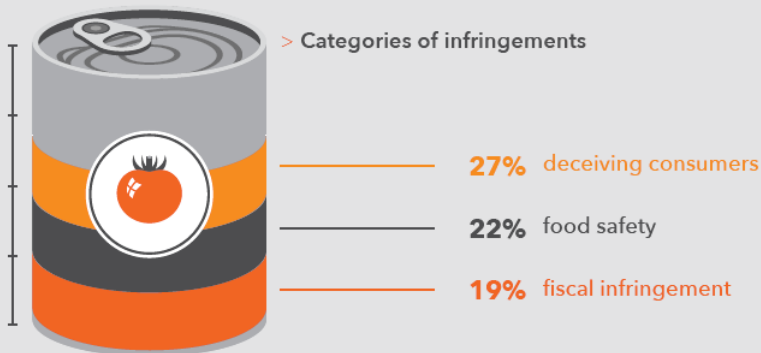
CONCLUSION 33

ANNEXES 35

KEY ELEMENTS

- **65 countries and 20 private partners**, from 22 EU Member States (MS) and 43 non-EU countries, participated in Operation OPSON VI. This represents the largest number of participating countries, especially for non EU countries, since the beginning of OPSON in 2011. 57 countries took part in OPSON V.
- In total, **13,407.60 tonnes, 26,336,305.3 litres** and **11,118,832 units** of either counterfeit or substandard food and beverages have been seized during the four month operational phase of OPSON VI. The total value of these illicit goods amounts to **235,681,849.87 EUR**.
- Participating countries reported more than **50,128 inspections and checks**, and **13,711 persons arrested or investigated**. They opened **6,282 administrative and criminal cases**. Investigations started in the framework of OPSON VI led to the dismantling of seven organised crime groups, reported as such by the countries and involved in the production of illegal food, other goods smuggling and other criminal activities.
- In terms of product range, the levels of seizure within OPSON VI differ significantly compared with OPSON V. The highest quantity of **seized products** is **alcohol** whereas the first category of seized products in OPSON V was condiments (*e.g.* vegetable oil, spices, and sauces). Enforcement actions during OPSON VI led to **the closure of at least 183 illegal alcohol factories** and to the seizures of production materials, ranging from special bottling machines to counterfeit excise stamps, caps, labels or bottle security rings. The second category of seized goods is **meat** with almost 5,146 tonnes removed from the markets.
- The reported **infringements** are, in most cases, related to **deceiving consumers (27%**, of which 1% are IPR violations), **food safety (22%) and fiscal infringements (19%)**.
- Besides the seizures of food and beverages, the participating countries reported important seizures of tobacco, coca leaves (in Peru), pharmaceuticals and cannabis (in Djibouti) which were discovered in the course of OPSON VI.
- The **debriefing meeting** was hosted by the Irish authorities in Dublin on 2 – 3 October 2017.

KEY ELEMENTS OPSON VI



SEIZURES OF



13,407.60
tonnes of food



26,336,305.3
litres of beverages



11,118,832
pieces/units



235 million EUR
total value of the illicit goods seized



50,128
inspections and checks



6,282
administrative and criminal cases



13,711
persons arrested
or investigated



Alcohol
is the most seized product

183
illegal alcohol factories
were closed



7
organized crime
groups were
dismantled

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the operational results of operation OPSON VI as well as all related activities developed in this framework. As with previous reports, it seeks to evaluate the threat regarding food fraud on the basis of the results reported by the participating countries.

Operation OPSON¹ was started in 2011 with 10 participating countries, exclusively European Member States. Developed in 2016 and early 2017, OPSON VI saw the participation of 65 countries from all continents, and 20 private companies or associations. In all cases deceiving consumers, fake or substandard products, often unfit for human consumption, were seized or withdrawn from the markets. Cross-border investigations were conducted and criminal networks involved in the production and distribution of illicit food products were dismantled.

Since its initiation, Operation OPSON has set clear objectives consisting of:

- protecting public health;
- fighting against organised crime groups involved in the trade of fake and substandard food;
- enhancing international cooperation;
- enhancing national cooperation between LEAs² and food regulatory agencies; and
- enhancing cooperation with private partners from the food and beverage industry.

These objectives remain valid and efforts to achieve them should continue.

Since 2011, the fight against food fraud has become a growing concern for all law enforcement bodies, due to the strong impetus given by politicians, notably at the European Union level. Across the globe, awareness has also increased significantly. Major steps have been taken towards the development of a more comprehensive approach against counterfeit or substandard food and beverages. The participation of 65 countries in OPSON VI, the highest since 2011, reflects this awareness and commitment to effectively tackle the issue. The increased involvement of the food industry in OPSON has led to better operational results.

Finally, as initiated during the report on OPSON IV, this review continues to provide examples of cases worked on by the participating countries. It cannot precisely reflect all activities carried out during the operational phase in all countries. However, besides a general overview of the phenomenon, it intends to give operational insights into the most counterfeited products and the different types of infringements detected. It also aims to provide information on the involved criminal groups.

This report was adopted by all participating countries. Its recommendations will be taken into account in the preparation of OPSON VII.

¹ OPSON (ὄψον) means food in ancient Greek.

² Refer to Annex 5 for Acronyms and Abbreviations.

SCOPE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Scope

Operation OPSON, in all its phases, has retained the same legal scope and framework targeting:

- Counterfeit food and beverages
- Substandard food and beverages

Food products are defined³ as any item or substance intended to be, or reasonably expected to be, ingested by humans or animals. Beverages are defined as drinkable liquids, that is to say liquids intended to be, or reasonably expected to be, ingested by humans or animals.

Food products do not include live animals (unless being prepared for sale in a market), plants prior to harvesting, medicinal products, cosmetics, tobacco and tobacco products, narcotic or psychotropic substances, or residues and contaminants.

A counterfeit food product is defined as a food product infringing an intellectual property right. All intellectual property rights defined under national and European law are included.

A substandard food product is defined as a product which does not meet the criteria required by European and national laws regarding its production, packaging, storage and distribution. Generally speaking, it is a product of a quality inferior to that which is legally required under European and national standards.

1.2 Legal framework

Both European and national legislations concerning intellectual property rights and food safety were enforced during the operation.

The exchange of intelligence and information between INTERPOL and the participating countries was made in accordance with Resolution AG-2011-RES-07 approving the Rules of the Processing of Data.

The exchange of intelligence and information between Europol and the participating countries was carried out according to the Europol Regulation and all related Decisions concerning the exchange and handling of information⁴.

The exchange of intelligence and information between INTERPOL and Europol complied with the operational agreement signed on 5 November 2001 between the two organizations.

However, the use of any other legal instrument of exchange of information or intelligence and cooperation, international or European (such as the “Naples II convention”⁵) was also applied if considered to be more appropriate to the situation. When relevant, the participating countries exchanged information and cooperated bilaterally. Europol and INTERPOL are therefore not in a position to report on those cases.

³ All definitions mentioned here have no legal value but are used in the framework of the operation.

⁴ Since 1st May 2017, Europol works under a new regulation: Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

⁵ Convention on mutual assistance and cooperation between customs administrations signed in Brussels on 18.12.1997.

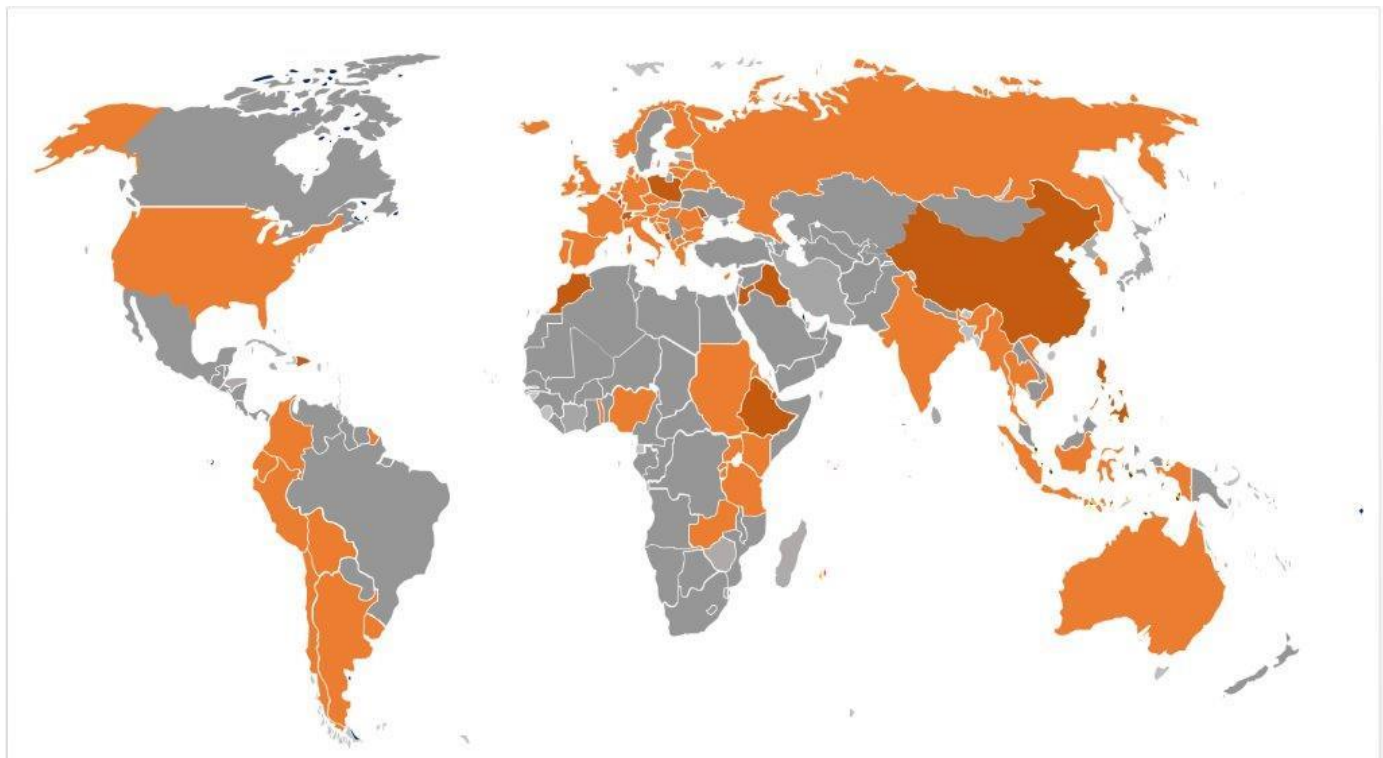
In the EU, Operation OPSON was implemented as an action of the EMPACT priority “Counterfeit goods violating health, safety and food regulations and substandard goods”, defined by the European Council Justice and Home Affairs⁶.

PARTICIPANTS

2.1 Participating countries, EUROPOL and INTERPOL

The following countries⁷ participated in OPSON VI: 65 in total, among them 22 EU MS.

Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, **China**, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, **Djibouti**, **Dominican Republic**, Ecuador, Eritrea, **Ethiopia**, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, **Iraq**, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, **Moldova**, **Montenegro**, **Morocco**, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, **Poland**, Romania, Russian Federation, Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Korea, Spain, Sudan, **Switzerland**, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Vietnam and Zambia.



*Participating countries in OPSON VI
Dark orange: countries participating for the first time*

The participating countries differ slightly compared to the previous edition. Overall, the OPSON network continued its expansion. The number of countries increased from 57 countries to 65.

⁶ In June 2013, the Council of the European Union defined a list of common priorities to enhance the fight against serious and organised crime. The list covers the period 2014 – 2017. One of these priorities is to disrupt Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) involved in the production and distribution of counterfeit goods violating health, safety and food regulations and those producing sub-standard goods (Council conclusions on setting the EU’s priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime between 2014 and 2017 - EMPACT Priorities)

⁷ Please refer to Annex 1 for the list of participating countries and involved agencies. The countries in bold letters are countries participating for the first time.

In Europe, the number of participating countries decreased from 23 countries for OPSON V to 22 EU MS. Poland implemented the operation OPSON for the first time. The national Polish forces carried out an operational plan which resulted in the start of at least one cross border investigation. Intelligence obtained in previous phases of OPSON showed this country was affected by food fraud. Switzerland also joined OPSON for the first time. The Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) coordinated the implementation of the initiative at the national level. After its first participation in 2016, Germany renewed its commitment in the fight against food fraud with OPSON VI. Europol will continue to stress the importance of the fight against food fraud in the EU in order to involve more countries.

INTERPOL gathered several newcomers such as China, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Iraq, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, and the Philippines. Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji Islands and Turkey did not take part in this phase of the operation.

As for previous phases, participating countries had to designate a national contact point responsible for the operation. The countries could appoint a single point of contact at the national level, or one point of contact per agency or administration. In most countries, contact points remained the same as for previous phases. This contributed to improving the implementation of the operational phase, as contact points could build on experience from previous phases and liaise more easily with counterparts, at the national level as well as abroad.

Europol and INTERPOL coordinated the operation by providing expertise and intelligence as well as technical and logistical support. Analysis Project Copy⁸, the project in charge of Intellectual Property Crimes and Public Health and Safety Crimes, coordinated the operation at Europol. At INTERPOL, the Illicit Goods and Global Health (IGGH) Programme promoted, developed and coordinated OPSON among third countries. The IGGH Programme worked closely with the INTERPOL Regional Bureaus of Buenos Aires and of Nairobi, in addition to the INTERPOL Liaison Office in Bangkok.

2.2 Private partners

The following private companies and associations participated in operation OPSON VI:

Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (CIVC - Association of Champagne producers), Comité Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bordeaux (CIVB - the Bordeaux Wine Bureau), The Coca Cola Company, Colgate-Palmolive Company, Consorzio di tutela Gorgonzola DOP, Consorzio di tutela Prosecco DOP, Unaprol Consorzio Olivicolo Italiano, Danone Group, Diageo plc, Ferrero Spa, International Federation of Spirits Producers (IFSP), Mars, Moët Hennessy, Mondelez International Inc., Nestlé, REACT (Association of various right holders), Red Bull, Scotch Whisky Association (SWA), the Tequila Regulatory Council (CRT), Unilever⁹.

Their participation consisted of:

- providing intelligence and risk assessments on their products during the pre-operational phase, including during training sessions tailored for law enforcement services;
- participating in preparatory meetings organised at the national level, *e.g.* in Kenya, with the support of the INTERPOL Regional Bureau of Nairobi;
- providing expertise in legal proceedings when needed.

Each private partner made available a list of relevant contact points according to the concerned geographical area.

Private partners were asked to join based on:

⁸ Previously Focal Point Copy. With the new Europol regulation, Focal Points became Analysis Projects.

⁹ For more information on the private partners, especially on their products, please refer to Annex 2: list of participating private companies/associations

- their size and presence in the different markets (Europe, USA, Middle East, Africa, South America, Asia), prioritising those most affected by the threat of counterfeiting; and
- their products.

The involvement of the above-mentioned private partners does not constitute any preferred relationship with Europol or INTERPOL. Their association was made on a voluntary basis, and did not imply any specific action from the law enforcement agencies involved in OPSON regarding their brands or products. Europol and INTERPOL are willing to develop partnerships with private partners of the food industry in order to reinforce the cooperation and the exchange of operational information. Countries are also invited to implement such partnerships at the national level if deemed relevant.

No new private partner joined OPSON VI. The network remained identical as for OPSON V. However, during OPSON VI, the involvement of some private partners notably increased. In some cases, this resulted from operational intelligence exchanged between the involved countries and the private partners leading to cases. In others, it stemmed from an initiative from the private partners who wished to be more active in the framework of OPSON. This commitment can only lead to enhanced operational results and was welcomed by the participating countries.

Generally speaking, OPSON VI saw greater involvement of private partners. The need for operational information was clearly recognized and understood by them, which resulted in more strategic information being provided to participating countries.

SCHEDULE OF THE OPERATION

The operation was divided into 3 phases.

3.1 Preparatory phase

Operation OPSON VI was launched in October 2016, during a meeting hosted by the Spanish Authorities (*Guardia Civil*, Police and Customs), in Madrid, Spain. The two day event debriefed operation OPSON V, by presenting the results and discussing the implementation of the operational phase. It officially launched OPSON VI with a discussion on new challenges for this phase, and updated delegates on on-going projects against food fraud (e.g. EMPACT Policy Cycle). The meeting gathered together more than 100 participants representing 54 countries, and nine private partners.

In order to provide capacity building support, INTERPOL organised a training session in partnership with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (US PTO). This two day event took place at the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, on 13-14 April 2016. It aimed to raise awareness about the scope and impact of food fraud, equip law enforcement agencies with the adequate skills to fight against this crime and strengthen the network involving representatives of the food and beverage industry. The training session gathered police officers from 15 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Peru, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia. Representatives from INTERPOL (Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme and Environmental Security Programme-Illegal Fishing), Europol, the food and beverages industry, USPTO, and the French Gendarmerie shared their expertise and cases on food fraud.

In November 2016, Europol with the support of Spain as action leaders and French authorities as hosts organised a training session for EU MS. The three day event aimed to gather intelligence on high risk food products, according to the results of previous operations. The training course focused on wine and olive oil. It included presentations from rights holders (brand owners and associations of producers) as well as case examples given by the LEAs OPSON contact points. The French Central Office against Environmental Crimes and Public Offences (OCLAESP) hosted the event in Paris, FR. 52 persons in total, among them 43 representatives from 21 EU MS, 6 representatives from the Private Sector, took part in the event.

3.2 Operational phase

The operational phase spanned four months between 01 December 2016 and 31 March 2017.

As in previous editions, checks and investigations were carried out on high risk entities in the food and beverage supply chains. Each participating country independently decided on the type of controls to be carried out. INTERPOL and Europol performed crosschecks against their databases and coordinated the dissemination of intelligence in order to support on-going actions.

The operational centre supported OPSON VI at Europol Headquarters during the entire operational phase.

The INTERPOL Command and Coordination Centre (CCC) provided round-the-clock support from 01 December 2016 to 31 March 2017. The INTERPOL Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme liaised with the National Central Bureaus (INTERPOL NCB) in the participating third countries by exchanging information via I24/7.

At the end of the operational phase, the participating countries sent all available results to the operational centres which centralized them.

3.3 Post operational phase

The results of the operational phase were to be sent to INTERPOL and Europol before 11 April 2017. From April 2017 to September 2017, both organizations analysed the data transmitted to assess the threat, and to identify best practices and areas of improvement.

A debriefing meeting was held in October 2017, organised with the support of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) together with the Spanish National Police, Guardia Civil and Spanish Customs. Results were presented by INTERPOL and Europol and by participating countries. This report was finalized after the debriefing meeting and sent to all countries via the appropriate communication channels.

RESULTS OF THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

4.1 Results received and elaboration of the statistics¹⁰

Data compiling and statistical analysis were carried out by the Criminal Intelligence Analyst of the INTERPOL Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme.

Thresholds for seizures to be reported were established at:

- 5 kilograms
- 5 litres
- 10 units

These limits were set in order to provide the most meaningful statistics.

The statistics are based on the reported information and on all other elements indicated by the participating countries as results. As the information reported was structured in different ways, in some cases containing different categories or missing information, the closest approximation of the actual figures is presented below. In addition and because in several cases the results concerning the same type of products were expressed in different measurements units (litres, kilograms or units/pieces), an approximate conversion whenever possible was made from units and pieces to litres and kilograms, including by using open source information¹¹ regarding the reported products and brands. When such approximation was not possible, the initial reported category was kept, thus resulting in total amounts expressed in litres, pieces and metric tonnes. Based on the reported results, the statistical analysis used several techniques, such as descriptive analysis, comparative analysis to identify relevant patterns and trends.

¹⁰ Please refer to Annex 3 Detailed statistics for more information on the results.

¹¹ Open source information was used whenever the brand was reported, for example to determine the average volume of a carton or a bottle for a determined product. In addition, the country codes used are in line with the ISO 3166-1 standard, available at www.iso.org. (Accessed 16.11.2017).

Regarding the calculation of the total value of the goods seized, the original information reported by the countries was kept and in the cases where no value was reported, it was calculated, at a minimal level, thanks to the commercial information available in open sources for similar products, using data from the respective reporting countries. When the reported amount was expressed in the national currency of the reporting country, a conversion to euro was performed with online available financial instruments¹². Regarding the different categories of products, details can be found in Annex 3.

4.2 Seizures, checks and investigations

All participating countries carried out checks throughout their national territory. Of note is that the whole chain of supply received attention, seizures being made at production sites, during the transport phase, or at the distribution and selling points of illicit foods and drinks. Law enforcement actions targeted all channels of distribution, including online sales.

4.2.1 Overall figures

In the framework of the operation, countries reported **50,128 inspections and checks, 6,282 administrative and criminal cases, and 13, 711 persons arrested or investigated**¹³.

As a comparison, 57 countries reported 3,567 administrative and criminal cases, 1,793 suspects and 41 arrests in the framework of OPSON V.

Moreover, the actions of national authorities led to the dismantling of at least seven organised crime groups, qualified as such by participating countries, involved in the production of illicit food, goods smuggling as well as other criminal deeds.

4.2.2 Seized quantities and categories of products

The seized quantities in the framework of OPSON VI are as follows¹⁴:

Global Results Seized Goods OPSON VI	
Unit of measurement	Quantity
Tonnes	13,407.6
Litres	26,336,305.3
Units	11,118,835

In total, **13,407.6 tonnes, 26,336,305.3 litres and 11,118,835 units** of potentially harmful food and beverages have been withdrawn from the markets. It is estimated that these illicit food products are worth **235,681,849.87 EUR**. These figures are undoubtedly the highest since the beginning of the initiative and clearly illustrate the efforts of all participating countries.

¹² Information available at www.numbeo.com was used to evaluate the price of the products whenever they were not reported. The price taken into consideration was the lowest displayed. The conversion of the national currency to EURO was done using the on line resources found at www.xe.com, at the rates valid in July 2017. (Both websites accessed 16.11.2017).

¹³ A case is an inspection that led to the notification of an infringement and/or a seizure or withdrawal of products. An inspection or a check is a control activity and does not always lead to a seizure. A suspect is an individual which has been either heard or detained in the framework of the enforcement activities. Unfortunately, the number of cases reported is not completely accurate as some inconsistencies remained in the reported results, and not all countries reported the global number of checks done at national level, or the number of suspects.

¹⁴ Seized quantities in previous operations are mentioned in Annex 3. Please refer to it for more details on the statistics.

Interventions and checks did not lead to any seizure above the thresholds in Cyprus, Croatia, Djibouti, India, The Netherlands, Switzerland and in Uruguay¹⁵.

According to all measurement units (weight, litres, and pieces), alcohol was the most seized product during OPSON VI.

Regarding the seizures reported in tonnes or kilograms, the biggest quantity is represented by meat with 5,145.93 tonnes, followed by fruits and vegetables with 3,083.54 tonnes and “other foods and drinks” (unspecified food and drinks) with 2,446.77 tonnes. Cereals, grains, and derived products came in fourth place with seizures amounting to 1,374.96 tonnes.

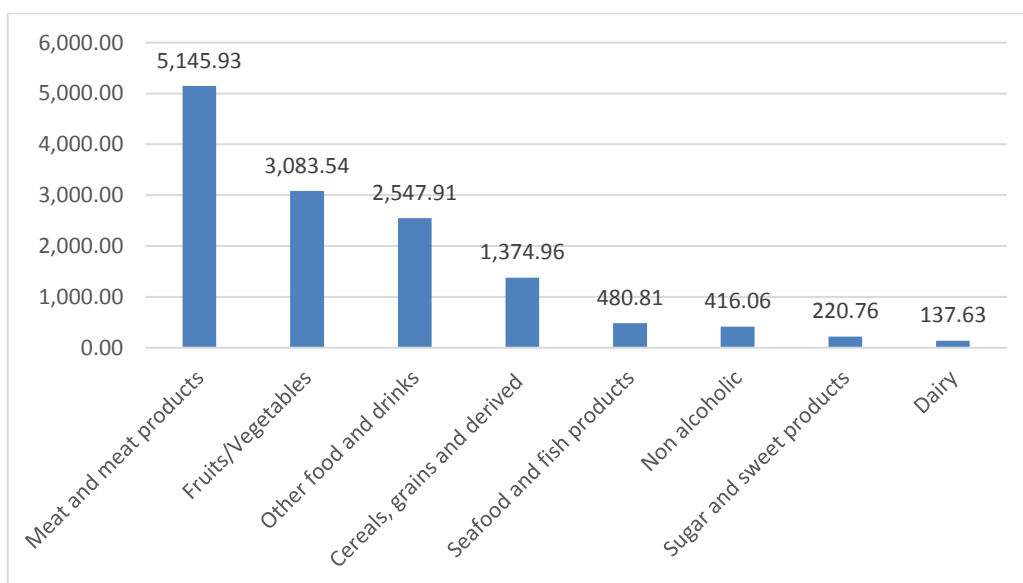
Following the volumes of seizures expressed in litres, alcohol was the most seized item with 25,766,430.17 litres, then non-alcoholic drinks (369,753 litres) and cooking oil with 84,404 litres seized.

For the category of reported seizures expressed in units/pieces, the highest amount was dietary supplements with 3,052,635 pieces seized, followed by condiments 2,786,983 pieces, the category “other food and drinks” with 1,924,825 units and finally nonalcoholic drinks with 1,861,800 units.

In terms of reported numbers of seizures in total, seafood holds the first place with 39%, followed by alcohol, 20% and meat 8%, making the seafood products the most seized item based on this criterion.

Regarding side seizures, countries reported about 407,867 pieces, more than 40 tonnes and over 34,000 litres of tobacco, pharmaceuticals and other non-food items. The seizures included also 150 kg of cannabis and 55 kg of coca leaves.

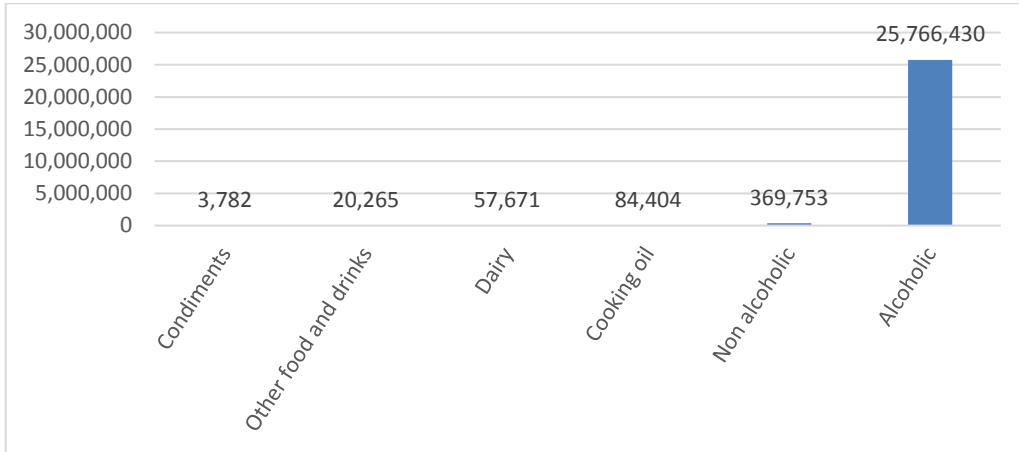
The proportion of seizures by **type of product** is as follows:



Graph 1

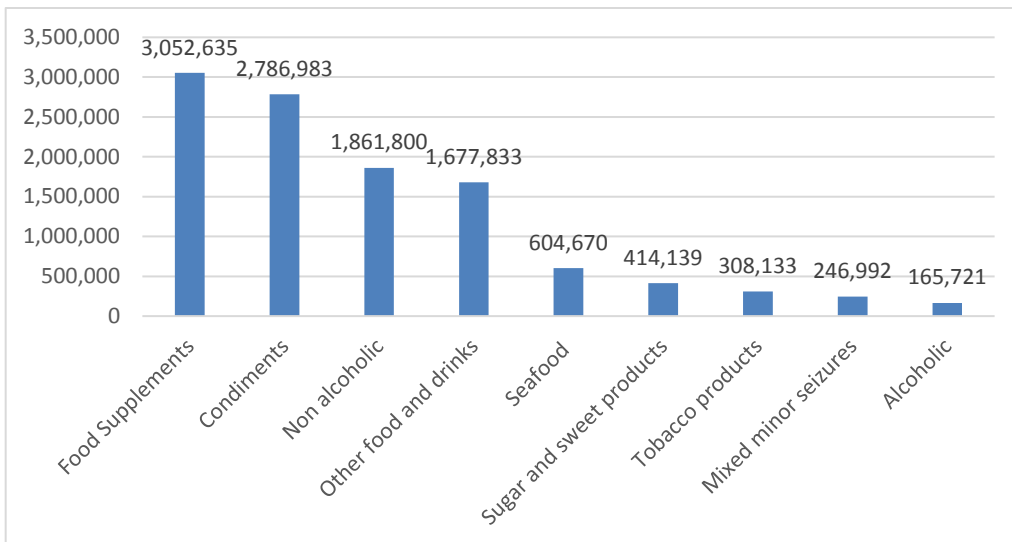
Proportion of seized goods per weight (metric tonnes)

¹⁵ Seizures above the threshold mentioned in page 12.



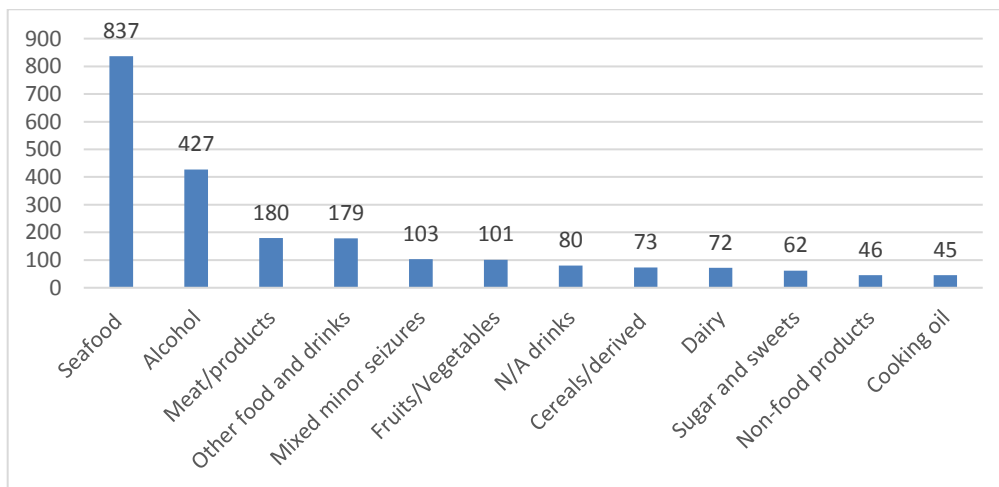
Graph 2

Types of seized products by volume (litres)



Graph 3

Types of seized products by unit



Graph 4

Types of seized products by cases

These results differ significantly from OPSON V, where the first category of seized products in all measurements (litres, units and tonnes) was *condiments*, representing 66% of the seizures reported in tonnes, and 35% in litres. Within this category, vegetable oil represented the most seized product. However, *fruits and vegetables* were also the second type of most seized products. But *meat and meat products* and *seafood* only amounted to respectively 3% and 8% of the goods seized and measured in tonnes. Unlike last year, no seizures of pet food were reported.

From the biggest seized quantities to the smallest, below is more information regarding the seizures of the different types of food products.

- **Alcohol**

Although not representing the biggest number of seizures, alcohol was the largest commodity seized during OPSON VI. It was present in all regions but more concentrated in Europe and the seizures revealed different types, be it homebrews, counterfeited famous brands or locally known alcohol products.

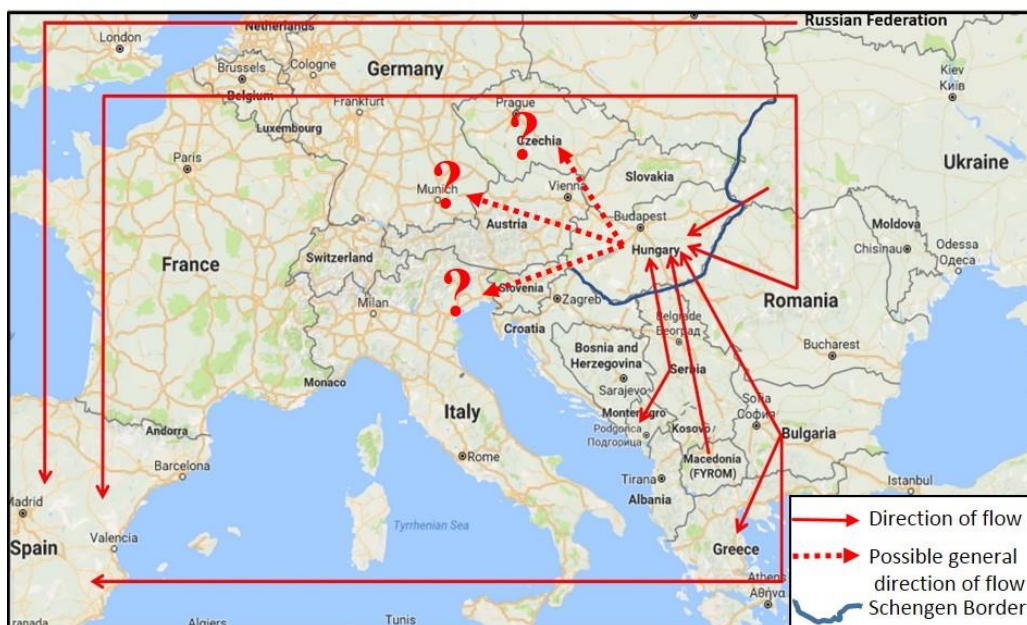
The Russian Federation reported the biggest volume seized with 21,617,200 litres of mixed alcohol, mostly because of intellectual property rights and fiscal infringement issues. The reported actions of the authorities in Russia led to the closure of illegal alcohol factories and to the seizure of packaging materials, alcohol-bottling machinery, counterfeit federal excise stamps, along with 5.6 million litres of raw ethyl alcohol and more than 16 million litres of alcoholic beverages ready to be sold.

In France, the seizures amounted to over 3,7 million litres of wine and spirits, seized mostly for food safety and deceiving-consumers infringements, for example brandy labelled as French containing Spanish wine, wine containing sulphites above authorized levels (presence of added sugar) or drinks concocted from unauthorized wines and altered whisky with added sugar.

Greece reported over 73,500 litres of seized alcohol, mostly relating to fiscal infringements, deceiving consumers and food safety. The alcohol came from Bulgaria, Romania and the Russian Federation. The Spanish authorities also seized 80 Bulgarian alcohol security strips possibly used for counterfeiting activities.

Ireland reported the presence of methanol of unknown origin, in genuine branded spirits, resulting in one suspected death and one case of permanent blindness.

In Hungary, albeit a rather small quantity of seized alcohol reported during OPSON VI, approximately 13,942 litres in 264 seizures, all on land-based transport, the country seemed to be a hub for alcohol smuggling from Eastern Europe coming from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia Macedonia and Ukraine.



Map 1

Alcohol flow from South Eastern to Western Europe - OPSON VI

In Europe, besides the countries mentioned above, counterfeit or illicit alcohol was reported also by Albania, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, Spain, Seychelles, Poland and Portugal.

In Africa, Morocco reported seizures of at least 130,625 litres of counterfeit alcohol, Burundi over 29,000 litres of illicit alcohol and Kenya more than 9,100 litres, mostly spirits. Tanzania, Comoros and Togo also reported seizures. In addition, Burundi closed down 14 illicit factories producing local alcoholic drinks. Alcohol products from Togo and Nigeria were seized in Belgium (about 2,030 litres of alcohol), transported from Togo by air and from Nigeria by sea.

In Asia, Thailand seized 28,710 litres of alcohol, together with hundreds of empty bottles and boxes used for packaging. The alcohol was mostly locally produced but also coming from Malaysia. Grounds for the seizures were mostly fiscal infringements and offences to food safety regulations. In addition, Vietnam reported the seizure of 4,750 litres of alcohol of unknown origin.

In the Americas, Colombia reported 1,261 bottles of smuggled alcohol and 430 bottles of adulterated alcohol, alongside boxes, corks, labels, security rings for alcohol bottles, and fake duty stamps. Peru reported seizures of approximately 2,142 litres of wine and Argentina reported 300 bottles of different kinds of spirits. The Dominican Republic reported several seizures (total of 610 litres), mostly spirits, all of them relating to counterfeited spirits and wine.

○ Meat and meat products

With regard to meat, 5,415.93 tonnes were reported from all regions and the most common infringements relate to food safety, ranging from improper storage, not compliant with storage rules for goods intended for human consumption to improper packaging, and lack of required documentation, *e.g.* health certificates. Other criminal *modi operandi* were reported as well. During an investigation in Peru, it was found that meat was injected with non-drinkable water to increase its weight, repacked, rebranded and intended for vending on the market. In the Czech Republic, the authorities found poultry meat infested with salmonella.

In most of the other cases, countries reported a mixture of infringements, frequently deceiving consumers, fiscal infringements and food safety altogether. One of the seizures in France revealed pork meat instead of duck meat. A total of 292 kg bush meat seized in several cases was seized on the grounds of a lack of health certificate (meat coming from Cameroon, Central African Republic or Senegal).

In the Middle East region, Iraq seized 58 tonnes of illicit meat, locally produced but also imported from Ukraine, India and Iran. The infringements were not specified.

In general, most of the countries reported problems regarding falsely labelled meat products, such as tampered labels to extend the expiration date and reinsert the illicit goods into a legal circuit.

- **Fruits and Vegetables**

In this category, Vietnam reported the highest amount of confiscated products, over 2,400 tonnes of fruits and vegetables, taken out of the market for food safety reasons. Generally, the most common reason for the seizures in this category was food safety. For example in the USA, the tests on 816 kg of fruits and vegetables (of unknown origin) returned positive results for salmonella. In addition, Italy reported a seizure of 105.2 tonnes of unspecified bulbs and tubers for food safety reasons.

Moldova seized over 1.9 tonnes of walnuts, because of infringements related to deceiving consumers and food safety. France was a destination country for fruits and vegetables consignments without health certificates coming from Cameroon, RD Congo, Lebanon, Mali, Vietnam, and other countries.

The checks in Germany targeted several consignments of hazelnuts from Italy, Georgia and Turkey, suspected of containing peanuts, cashew nuts or almonds or other undeclared allergenic substances. Results of the analysis showed that one batch of 1.3 tonnes of roasted chopped hazelnuts contained 8% peanuts.

In France, Customs seized 55 kg of corossol¹⁶ without phytosanitary certificates. The merchandise originated from Cameroon. The fruit is becoming more and more popular for the European markets and it is increasingly sold online. Leaves of the tree are advertised and sold as a treatment against cancer, and digestive troubles. Different corossol-based foodstuffs appeared on the market such as beverages, dried leaves or leaves crushed down to a fine powder. This product should be considered as a **new risk** in terms of food fraud. It is suggested that participating countries involved in OPSON conduct a national threat assessment on this product.

- **Food supplements**

Food supplement seizures were reported by the USA, mostly because of food safety infringements. In one of the cases, the seized products which came from China contained high levels of lead. US authorities are now investigating the causality between this product and the death of two elderly persons.¹⁷ In several other cases in the US, dietary supplements were seized because they contained sibutramine and dinitrophenol.¹⁸ Vietnam reported more than 6,000 litres of unauthorized food additives taken off the consumption market and destroyed. These types of products were reported also by Spain, UK, Portugal and Peru. In the latter case, authorities found expired food colorants. Icelandic Customs also seized food supplements, in small parcels. The products had been ordered online.

- **Seafood**

Most of the seizures included in this category were made in Italy and France. However, seafood products were also seized in smaller quantities in the USA, Iraq, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Czech Republic, Spain and Moldova. The most common infringement category regarding seafood was deceiving consumers, especially with species substitution.

¹⁶ According to the information reported by France, *Graviola Corossol*, botanical name *Annona muricata*, is a broadleaf, flowering, evergreen tree. The exact origin is unknown; it is native to the tropical regions of the Americas and is widely propagated. The fruit, known as *soursop*, has allegedly numerous health benefits, and leaves of the tree are reported to treat cancer. Until now, scientific studies have not confirmed these properties.

¹⁷ Please see case example reported in section 5.3.2 of this report for details.

¹⁸ Sibutramine is a chemical substance used as a slimming supplement, by reducing one's appetite. Due to its dangerous side effects, in 2010, FDA recommended the voluntary withdrawal from the US market. It is banned also in the EU, and in most countries, e.g in UAE. Dinitrophenyl, more commonly known as DNP, is a chemical substance also used as weight loss product. It is not authorized in the USA, as well as in the EU for human consumption. Reported side-effects include sleep disturbance, body dehydration and catalyzing cancer. In some cases, DNP consumption can be lethal. For details please see: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drugsafety/ucm228746.htm>, <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/aboutfda/centersoffices/officeofmedicalproductsandtobacco/cder/ucm550079.pdf>.

Food safety was the second most common infringement, ranging from expired products and inaccurate storage or transport conditions to detecting the presence of *Listeria Monocytogenes*¹⁹ and other harmful substances (USA) or fish eggs contaminated with phenoxyethanol, a potentially toxic substance when ingested²⁰ by humans (France – 300kg of trout eggs).

- **Sugar and sweet products**

As expected, this type of product was reported by 15 countries, in different amounts. Honey is still a high-risk product in terms of fraud. The most significant seizures were reported by the UK, where authorities seized 70 iron drums of honey (almost 29 tonnes) originating from China and another 15 tonnes in New Zealand. The reason for these seizures was deceiving consumers and “other” infringements. In the UK, the seized products contained added sugar. Hungary reported more than 18 tonnes of adulterated honey seized because of food safety. In Belgium, authorities confiscated small amounts of honey, coming from Togo, packed in reprocessed plastic containers, previously utilized to contain lubricants. Lithuania seized 366,876 pieces of candy in plastic eggs and bracelets for Intellectual Property Rights Infringements, with the merchandise coming from Turkey and Hong Kong. Furthermore, Latvia reported the seizures of almost 9,000 pieces of expired candies, relabeled and sold to major retailers. In Portugal, chewing gum originating from China was found to contain metallic fragments, thus seized as a food hazard.

- **Cereals, grains and derived products**

These types of products were reportedly seized by several countries but the most notable seizures came from Iraq with 95 tonnes of local flour and China over 76 tonnes of expired flour coming from France. An interesting account comes from the Philippines, which reported the highest amount of goods pertaining to this category, *i.e.* 19 containers (20 foot), 7 containers (40 foot) and more than 12,953 bags of rice, coming from India, China, Pakistan, Hong Kong (China) and Thailand. Goods were seized on the basis of fiscal infringements. In addition, Greece, Sudan, Spain, Peru, Jordan, Italy and Zambia reported seizures in this category in smaller amounts, mostly because of food safety reasons.

- **Olive oil and cooking oil**

During OPSON VI, seizures of cooking oil amounted to more than 84,000 litres and about 18.7 tonnes, most of it relating to food safety and deceiving consumer types of infringements. Alleged extra virgin olive oil was actually a blend of different oils, in some cases of unknown origin. Portugal reported the seizure of 11,354 litres of falsified olive oil, coming mostly from EU countries. In Norway, the authorities confiscated about 1,940 litres of olive oil from Spain, Lebanon and Turkey.

When focusing on this specific product, Denmark reported that out of the 35 samples of extra virgin olive oil analysed²¹, 9 samples were extra virgin olive oil, 16 samples were only virgin olive oil, 8 samples were lampante oil²² and 2 samples revealed an oil of a lower quality than lampante oil. In total, 26 samples had problems with the authenticity. Italy reportedly seized more than 18.5 tonnes and over 2,900 litres of olive oil for infringements related to deceiving consumers, the seizures here accounting for the highest quantity of olive oil seized during OPSON VI.

Furthermore, Zambia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Portugal, Belgium, Spain and Italy have reported together seizures of over 66,000 litres of cooking oil (sunflower oil, palm oil and unspecified oil), the infringements referring to food safety and deceiving consumers.

¹⁹ This bacterium is known to cause acute headache, fever, abdominal pain, sleepiness, nausea, aching muscles, painful joints, vomiting etc.

²⁰ See details about this aspect at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_o_195.pdf

²¹ The samples were sent to a laboratory in Spain for organoleptic assessment and chemical analysis.

²² Type of oil not fit for human consumption, without further refining.

- **Non-alcoholic beverages**

Seizures of non-alcoholic drinks, in small amounts, were reported by most of the countries, either counterfeit, adulterated, mislabelled or expired. The UK reported the withdrawal of more than 396 tonnes of product labelled as “100% coconut water” which were found to have either added sugars or misleading labelling originating from Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines or Vietnam.” Albania reported more than 171,000 litres of illicit mineral water and Hungary seized 93,000 litres of filtered expired apple juice. In Italy, an investigation also targeted a criminal group involved in the production of counterfeit mineral water (see 4.3.4).

In the Middle East, Iraq reported the seizure of 8,972 boxes and 18 tonnes of juice. In Africa, Zambia reported over 2,600 litres of juice and mineral water seized mostly for deceiving consumers and food safety reasons.

Among the ***new trends*** to be noticed regarding non-alcoholic beverages, coconut water seems to represent a high risk product, with high demand from consumers willing to purchase healthy products, and easy ways to adulterate the genuine drink or imitate it (with added sugar and water for instance).

- **Dairy products**

Several countries reported seizures of dairy products, in different quantities, but notable cases were reported in Iraq, where the authorities confiscated over 55 tonnes of yogurts locally produced but coming also from Turkey, the USA, and Iran. Italy seized more than 73 tonnes of various dairy products, mostly for food safety reasons, deceiving consumers and for Intellectual Property Right Infringements (IPRI). France reported over 44 tonnes of such products seized (mostly milk), all seizures relating to food safety, *e.g.* a seizure of cheese revealed that the product was infected with listeria and several seizures of milk exposed traces of caustic soda, antibiotics or veterinary medicines.

- **Condiments**

This category includes commodities such as vinegar, salt, pepper, spices, variety of sauces and seasoning products. It did not include olive oil and cooking oil.

Indonesia reported the largest amounts seized, namely 2,644,178 pieces of sauce items (tomato, soya and chili sauces, representing more than 90% of the total seizures of such products, relating to food safety, fiscal or other infringements. Similar seizures but in lower amounts were reported by Spain, Zambia, Czech Republic, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Finland mostly for food safety and deceiving consumers reasons. French Customs seized more than 179 000 counterfeit seasoning cubes (see 4.3.4). Denmark reported checks on these types of products in order to identify undeclared substances and fillers, which returned negative results.

- **Infant formula and powdered milk**

These types of products were counted as a category in itself, in view of the risk for safety they represent, and the fact that they target a very specific public (babies and young children). Furthermore, they do not always fall in the dairy products category as they can be made out of soya.

Poland seized 66 pallets (about 22 tonnes) of illicit powdered milk, estimated at around 70,000 Euro. The investigation is ongoing. The USA mentioned the seizure of 86 pallets and another 1,493 unspecified shipments of infant formula intercepted, originating both locally and from Europe. These types of seizures were reported also by other countries like Belgium and Tanzania, generally relating to food safety infringements.

- **Livestock**

Besides the confiscations of the products from the above-mentioned categories, the legal actions during OPSON VI led to the seizure of more than 37,000 livestock, reported by Vietnam, Portugal, France and Greece, consisting mainly in cattle and poultry. The reported infringements were mostly deceiving consumers (*i.e.* injecting live pigs with water to increase their weight) or food safety.

○ **Miscellaneous**

During OPSON VI, besides the commodities clearly included in one of the specified criteria above, the reports have indicated also volumes and quantities of mixed or undetermined food and drinks. The majority of inputs contained such references, but notable cases came from Vietnam reporting 5,063,132 units of candies, cream, milk and supplementary medicines seized and destroyed. Similarly, Jordan reported more than 60 tonnes of milk, meat, juice, cheese, biscuits and unspecified food products. Belarus reportedly seized over 22 tonnes of sugar, milk products and other unspecified items. In the USA, 70 boxes of unspecified foodstuff originating from the Dominican Republic returned positive results for salmonella.

4.2.3 Types of infringements

The types of infringements reported by the participating countries are as follows:

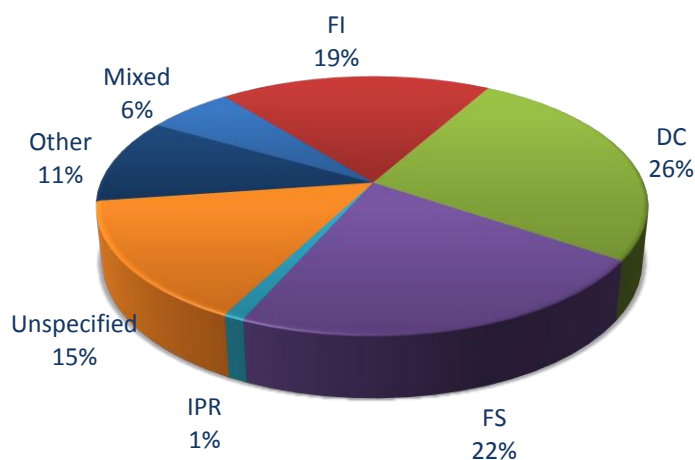


Chart 1

Types of infringements by number of cases²³

The most reported infringements during OPSON VI related to deceiving consumers (27%), food safety (22%) and fiscal infringements (18%). In some cases, reports indicated mixed categories of infringements and in 15% of the cases, no infringement was reported at all.

Considering a regional spread of infringements and excluding the unspecified ones, the following categories were frequently reported: in **Africa** deceiving consumers (11%), food safety (8%), in the **Americas** food safety (29%), fiscal infringements (23%) and mixed (22%), in **Asia** food safety (33%), and mixed (20%) and in **Europe** deceiving consumers (30%), food safety (23%) and fiscal infringements (20%). Of note is the prevalence in all areas of infringements related to food safety, especially in Asia and in Europe, meaning the threat to consumers is tangible. IPR infringements on the contrary only amount to a very small proportion of the reported cases (1%). One can wonder if this number

²³ Cases were categorised in the following infringements

Infringements
FI = fiscal infringement Example: alcohol duties
DC = deceiving consumers Example: falsely labelled extra virgin olive oil
FS = food safety Example: infringement related to the storage conditions of the goods
IPRI = Intellectual Property Rights Infringement Example: all IPR, including appellations of origins

illustrates the actual lack of IPR infringement noticed by participating countries, or if it results from the enforcement of food safety regulations before any other type of regulations.

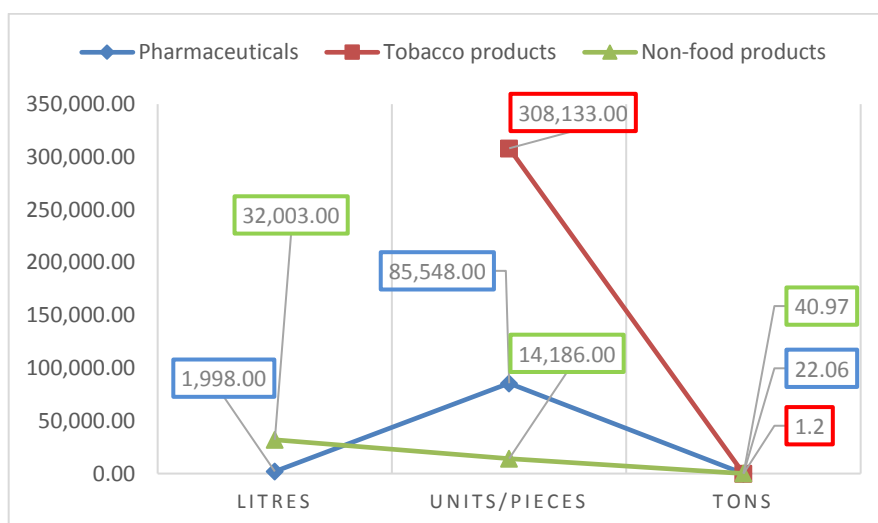
4.2.4 Side seizures

Unlike OPSON V, many side seizures were reported this year, involving very different types of products. As an example, Peru reported a seizure of approximately 295,000 cigarettes and 55 kg of coca leaves, smuggled from Bolivia, while Ecuador seized over 9,000 pieces of smuggled watches, shoes, cosmetics, mobile accessories or medicines. In addition, Romania reported seizures of footwear, cosmetics and perfumes, the Czech Republic reported textiles, shoes and tobacco products, Chile more than 14 tonnes of fish food (pellets), Eritrea glycerin and cigarettes, Ethiopia glycerin, cosmetics and cigarettes, Kenya cosmetics, Uganda vehicle spare parts and cosmetics. During OPSON VI, Djibouti reported the seizure of 150 kg of *cannabis sativa*, estimated at around 3,000 USD.

Regarding pharmaceuticals, during OPSON VI, in Europe, Belgium reported seizures from Nigeria and Thailand, and Spain seized herbal pills in the Canary Islands. In Africa, several countries²⁴ reported the seizure of illicit medicines, but the widest range of pharmaceuticals²⁵ was reported by Burundi and Ethiopia.

Additionally, in the course of the OPSON operational actions, authorities of the participating countries seized means of transportations, for example various types of vehicles, motorcycles or even bicycles, stolen or used for criminal activities.

Of particular interest in this category are seizures of production tools or packaging materials, such as machines for bottling, fake excise stamps, fake boxes, fake security rings for bottles, fake corks and a variety of fake packaging, seizures reported by the Russian Federation, Vietnam, Spain, Colombia and other countries, which suggest the increased complexity of the illegal activity.



Graph 5

Side seizures per category of products

The category 'Other non-food items' includes various items such as watches, mobile phone accessories, underwear, glycerine, led lights, body lotion, diapers, bathing suits, candles, foliage and women's handbags.

²⁴ Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Comoros, Ethiopia, Seychelles.

²⁵ Antibiotics, analgesics, gastro-intestinal, ointments, medical supplies, etc.

4.2.5 Targeted Activities

Some countries focused on specific threats and therefore carried out targeted campaigns. In The Netherlands, authorities (NVWA) performed checks on fraudulent laboratory certificates regarding aflatoxins in pistachios and hazelnuts. The investigations involved on-site inspections (20 companies inspected in a two month period) and reviews of required documents. As a result, many irregularities were found; one of them included a RASFF notification regarding high levels of aflatoxins in some products.

In Germany, authorities, namely the Food Control Authorities, Customs, and the Federal Criminal Police Office focused on the presence of undeclared peanuts, cashew nuts, almonds in hazelnuts products from Turkey, Georgia and Italy. The operation was coordinated by the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety. Results also showed irregularities in the inspected products and one case led to the opening of a criminal investigation. Australia also looked into peanuts consignments from Malaysia. Laboratory analysis revealed presence of undeclared peanuts in some products.

Among other products, Austria and Denmark more specifically targeted olive oil and performed checks on food operators, including restaurants. Although no seizure was reported in Austria, irregularities discovered during the actions were notified to the involved businesses. In Denmark, 26 samples out of 35 checked in total revealed mislabelling and authenticity issues.

In the United Kingdom, all four nations implemented a thematic approach following the recommendations of regional threat assessments. Northern Ireland and Wales focused on food supplements, Scotland targeted door to door fish sales, meat speciation, nut powders, counterfeit alcohol and spirits and illegal shellfish harvesting. England prioritized exploring the adulteration of coconut water and honey, with more local activity looking at the adulteration of turmeric and nut powders, and at game traceability. Among the results, one can mention the seizure of 396.7 tonnes of coconut water in England, 2.3 tonnes of out of date meat in Scotland and 800 kilos of food supplement seized in Wales and Northern Ireland.

4.2.6 Organised Crime Groups dismantled

Like during previous editions, participating law enforcement agencies conducted comprehensive and sometimes difficult investigations in order to dismantle the criminal groups involved in the production and sales of illicit food products and beverages. Those cases illustrate the involvement of structured groups working according to specific procedures and business models.

4.3 Case examples

The following cases were reported by the participating countries and illustrate some of the existing threats across all geographical areas, as well as efforts deployed by all participating law enforcement agencies in the fight against food fraud. The examples are presented by regional zones, and alphabetical order.

4.3.1 Africa

- *Case example Burundi : seizure of illicit alcohol*

In Burundi, the police together with other national authorities closed down an improvised distillery that produced local drinks. During the raid, actions of the authorities led to the seizure of approximately 29,000 litres of local illegal brews locally known as *umunanasi*, *kanyanga*, *kambuse*, *giti*, *umuraha* and *umudirinki*.



Improvised distillery discovered in Burundi

- *Case example Kenya : smuggling of alcohol*

During the operation, the Kenyan national authorities found and seized numerous types of smuggled alcohol, in the Central Business District of Nairobi and in the city of Lodwar (N-W of the country). The seizures included bottles of vodka, rum, whiskey and various sorts of beer, totaling 1,997.725 litres and estimated at 9,906 EUR.



Alcohol discovered in Kenya

- *Case example Nigeria: seizure of counterfeit Champagne*

The National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control in Nigeria seized counterfeit alcoholic beverages amongst which were 51.3 litres of counterfeit champagne. The investigation in Nigeria has shown that the labels and packaging materials of these counterfeit products were smuggled into Nigeria from an unknown location. The investigation is ongoing.



Counterfeit Champagne discovered in Nigeria

- *Case example Rwanda : alcohol and food products*

Operative actions of the National Police in Rwanda (84 police officers) conducted in collaboration with other public and private institutions, within the framework of OPSON, in the Districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge and Musanze, have led to the seizures of foodstuff and alcohol, as well as of other various goods. Amongst the seized items, police officers detected counterfeit whiskey using special equipment. Some products were impounded in the owners' stocks while others were kept in Ministry of Agriculture stores and later legally destroyed.



Seized products in Rwanda

- *Case example Sudan: illicit sales of flour*

A joint team of the Departments of Consumer Protection and Standards and Specification arrested one person for the violation of article 4 of the Food Censorship Act of Sudan, by repacking wheat flour imported from Turkey and rebranding it for sale on the local market. In addition, this illicit activity was carried out in improper conditions in an unauthorized location, which was closed down by the authorities who confiscated 16,675 kg of flour before the illicit product entered the market.



Site of the illicit repacking of flour - Sudan

- *Case example Togo : relabeled expired food*

In the area of Lomé, the National Police in Togo successfully dismantled a criminal network, which was involved in the distribution of expired food and drinks such as pasta, canned drinks, canned milk, tomato sauce, by modifying the expiration date of the merchandise. The products were sold locally but also exported to Niger. Amongst other products, authorities seized 973 boxes of canned drinks and 2,000 boxes containing pasta products. They temporarily closed several warehouses accommodating foodstuff and drinks.



Seized food with tampered best before date in Togo

- *Case example Zambia: lack of compliant labels on beverages*

In Lusaka, Zambia, the Intellectual Property Unit of the Police, after an inspection in a local office of a company based in China, seized 1,383.36 litres of beverages, which had no expiring date on the packaging. The origin of the merchandise is yet to be established, as the investigation is ongoing.



Seized food in Zambia

4.3.2 Americas

- *Case example Argentina : illicit food supplements*

According to information from Argentina, the Bus Terminal Division of the Argentinian Federal Police seized 1,287 bottles of dietary supplements, containing 115,830 pills, possibly produced in the United States. The investigation revealed that this product was sold in the United States of America, advertised as dietary supplement and high performance fat burner. It was banned in the USA because of its content of sibutramine and phenolphthalein. These substances may severely harm human health, causing heart attacks and strokes. In the light of the above mentioned, the population was warned against the distribution and consumption of this product. This measure was adopted by sanitary controls countries such as Australia, Singapore, Canada, Ecuador or Panama.

- *Case example Peru : out of date food and poor storage conditions*

During the operation, in a location south of the Lima district, the Peruvian authorities seized expired food items and substances used for food preparation, estimated at around 145,585 Euros. The goods, fuchsia colorants and plastic bottles containing drinks, were expired since 2015. Another 6.4 kg of fat (butter) were kept in poor storage conditions. Traces of insects and rats in the food preparation area were visible. The utensils used were in bad state of conservation and hygiene.



Inspections in Peru

- *Case example USA: dietary supplements containing high levels of lead*

In the Chicago area, after a series of adverse health events were reported, a dietary supplement based on raw materials originating in China was confirmed as containing high levels of lead, of which some tested near toxic. The subjects associated with this case ultimately died, but their deaths could not be confirmed as being solely related to the ingestion of these supplements, as they were elderly persons and their health was already deteriorated. The owner of the stores who also manufactured the supplements locally without FDA's approval, voluntarily recalled the supplements and reimbursed the customers for any unauthorized products they purchased. The investigation revealed that one of the distributors apparently substituted one of the plant-based ingredients imported from China, for an industrial version used in paint thinners, which created the high levels of lead.



Dietary supplement containing unauthorized levels of lead

- *Case example USA: mislabeled shrimps*

The US authorities reported that a large amount of imported shrimps was mislabeled and possibly adulterated. According to the information received, seized shrimps were declared as originating from Malaysia, when the true origin was Chinese. Declaring a false origin allows to avoid customs duties. In addition, the shrimps contained excessive amounts of Nitro-Furan, a substance used in antibiotics.

- *Case example USA: Listeria Monocytogenes outbreak*

The Food and Drug Administration investigated a *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak suspected to come from leafy greens. Epidemiological trace back information indicated as source a producer facility in Springfield, Ohio where 13 persons were hospitalized. The investigation revealed that a sample of chopped Colorful Coleslaw and two samples of Caesar Salad Kit, in both cases from the same producer, collected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency were reported as positive for *Listeria Monocytogenes*.

4.3.3 Asia-Pacific region

- *Case example China: expired flour*

On March 20, 2017, the Market Supervision Administration of Minhang District of Shanghai raided a Limited Company located in the Minhang District. They found at the scene that the company was using expired raw materials for production, processing and delivery of bread and pastries to restaurant and stores. A task force was then set up and an investigation was initiated on suspicion of the crime of producing and selling counterfeit products. Eight suspects involved have been arrested and related items have been seized. Up till the investigation, in total 1,890.25 loaves of bread were sold (9,487.25 CNY worth, about 12,160 EUR). 1,929.75 loaves were withdrawn from the markets and destroyed under the supervision of law enforcement officers.



Expired raw materials for production and delivery of bread and pastries

- *Case example Indonesia: seizures of substandard sauce*

On 3rd March 2017, within the framework of the operation, the National Agency of Drugs and Food Control of Indonesia seized chili sauce, tomato sauce and soya sauce, substandard food items which were being produced in improper conditions and raised concern regarding human health if consumed. In addition, the manufacturers were using false registration numbers for all the foodstuffs labels. The Indonesian authorities estimated the value of 2,644,178 items at 360,000 EUR. If consumed the products would have led to poisoning and diarrhea. The National Agency of Drugs and Food Control stopped the production of the company and launched an extensive investigation.



Discovery of sauce in an illicit factory

- *Case example South Korea: added water in frozen products*

Actions of the Korean Police revealed that two suspects had added water to frozen freshwater snails in order to increase the weight. Furthermore, they packed the products into new packaging, thus making it look as if it was freshly packed and selling it by deceiving the buyers regarding the real weight of the products. The estimation of the Korean police indicates that using this modus operandi, the two persons managed to sell merchandise of approximately 3,449,188.57 EUR (170,000,000 KRW).



Snails with added water – South Korea

- *Case example Vietnam: fake monosodium glutamate used to produce counterfeit food products*

In the province of Ninh Binh, local authorities arrested three persons who were involved in counterfeiting food products. The police actions led to the seizure of more than a ton of illegal monosodium glutamate, originated in China and another 900 kilograms of fake monosodium glutamate, originated in Japan, South Korea and Vietnam. These substances together with other items were used for counterfeiting various foodstuffs.

- *Case example Vietnam: added water in cattle*

The Police in Dong Nai province caught in the act a perpetrator who was unlawfully injecting water into pigs, in order to increase the weight before selling them. At the scene, competent authorities found 57 pigs in cages, ready for water injection in the esophagus and 130 pigs which had been already water injected. The whole consignment was prepared for immediate transportation to the city of Tay Ninh, for selling. The local authorities stopped the selling process.

4.3.4 Europe

- *Case example France : counterfeit seasoning products*

French Customs seized more than 179,000 seasoning cubes illegally bearing a trademark owned by one of the participating companies in OPSON. The products were discovered during the search of a wholesaler premises, located in the suburban area of Paris. Customs initiated the case upon intelligence received from the company owner of the brand, and they confirmed the products were counterfeit. Goods were quickly disposed of according to the simplified destruction procedure. Investigations are ongoing to identify origin, route and final destination of the items.



Counterfeit bouillon cubes seized by French Customs – France

- *Case example Ireland: illegal food business operator*

An Garda Síochána, Ireland's National Police Service stopped a van which they had under surveillance for a period of time. When the vehicle was searched a large quantity of unrefrigerated, unpacked, unlabeled meat and other products were discovered along with alcohol and tobacco. The van was seized and Customs Officers were granted a warrant in the district court to search the home address of the occupants. The food included frozen cooked smoked chicken and various jarred produce containing fruit, vegetable, soup sauce, jams, preserves and condensed milk, totaling 1096 pieces.

- *Case examples Italy: fake mineral water and counterfeit wine*

Italian Carabinieri NAS in cooperation with the Ministry of Health seized more than 266,000 litres of mineral water (almost 32,000 bottles) in the area of Lazio. Bottles imitated a registered trademark of mineral water. Labels and shapes of the plastic containers were similar to the genuine products. Investigations revealed that the water originated from the same source. However, no market authorization had been granted and bottling was done without regards of health and safety regulations. One person was arrested.



Bottling plant of the fake bottles

In Tuscany, Italian Carabinieri dismantled an Organised Crime Group (OCG) involved in the production and distribution of fake wine, sold as famous and protected red wine (protected geographical indication of origin). The investigation was coordinated by the antimafia regional unit of Florence. In total, 13 persons have been identified and three of them arrested. In the OCG, each individual was in charge of specific tasks regarding production and distribution of the bottles. Pure alcohol was added to low quality wine used as raw material to increase the volume

of alcohol. Labels, including fake official labels of protected geographical indications were placed on the bottles at the final stage of production. These illicit activities took place on a farm located in the Tuscan countryside. The property has been seized. Wine was sold on the Italian market and abroad.



Searches of the premises in Tuscany



Alcohol added in the wine



Fake fiscal stamps placed on the bottles

- *Case example Greece: smuggled alcohol*

In March 2017, the Financial and Economic Crime unit of the Ministry of Finance discovered two illicit storage sites of alcohol. The investigating team placed the premises under surveillance and started their action by checking delivery vehicles entering the site. All products were smuggled mostly from Bulgaria, thus evading excise duties. Almost 1 300 litres of smuggled alcohol (vodka and whisky) were seized and 5 persons were arrested.



Illicit production site of alcohol - Greece

- *Case example Russia: illicit alcohol production site*

Russian authorities reported a case from the Leningrad region, where the perpetrators were using modern machinery for alcohol production and bottling. The bottles were labeled using federal special marks with fake signs, in order to give an appearance of authenticity to the counterfeit products. The authorities have confiscated raw alcohol, equipment used for alcohol production, fake special marks and batches containing bottled alcohol production, destined for the local and possibly international market.



Illicit production site of alcohol - Russia

- *Case example Portugal: counterfeit tin cans of fish*

The Portuguese Food Safety and Economic Authority (ASAE) raided a factory in the area of Porto which resulted in the finding of processed fish manufactured without respect for safety rules. This outcome was achieved after several weeks of investigation and surveillance work. The plant was targeted as its license to process food had been already withdrawn. ASAE uncovered illicit activities consisting in repacking almost expired sardines in tomato sauce, regardless of traceability and hygienic rules. Products were intended for exportation and intra EU deliveries. The business was closed immediately after the action day. All material found in the premises was seized, namely 311,000 cans, 16 jars of tomato sauce, 9,900 packing boxes, 24,730 labels and 700 Kilos of salt.



Factory illegally manufacturing cans of fish – Portugal

COMMUNICATION POLICY

As agreed during the preparation phase, INTERPOL and Europol published a joint press release on 25th April 2017 (Annex 4). The document was available on both INTERPOL and Europol websites, with two versions containing different examples from EU MS for Europol and Third countries for INTERPOL.

Reported cases in the press release were selected by Europol and INTERPOL on the basis of communication criteria, using available visuals. The choice of these cases does not reflect any prioritisation or hierarchy among the reported results.

EVALUATION OF OPSON VI

In the wake of what has been previously explained, reviewing OPSON VI leads to comments on the achievements as well as and recommendations for future operations. They are listed below.

6.1 Achievements

The accomplishments mentioned below were achieved in OPSON VI, building upon experience gained in previous phases of OPSON. Achievements reported in previous editions assessments still remain valid.

- **Protection of consumers, by disposing of fake food and drinks**

During OPSON VI, law enforcement actions targeted the food supply chain in a more systematic manner, aiming at increasing the protection of consumers by removing illicit food and drinks products from the market. Counterfeit or substandard food and beverages seized during OPSON VI increased significantly in comparison to the previous years, particularly regarding illicit alcohol, a high-risk product regarding health. The operation led to the seizure and removal from the markets of important quantities of illicit meat, fruits and vegetables, seafood or other potentially hazardous food and drinks.

- **Highest number of participating countries so far**

OPSON VI gathered 65 countries, the highest number since the beginning of the initiative. Increased participation was reflected in the amounts of goods seized, the largest so far. New countries joining OPSON such as China, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Iraq, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Philippines, Poland and Switzerland carried out significant actions and provided important contributions to OPSON VI. The commitment of LEAs resulted in checks targeting all the critical points of the supply chain such as airports, seaports, land borders, and import/export wholesalers' factories and manufacturing sites, warehouses, markets premises, shops, including online sales.

- **Dismantling of organised crime groups**

The information reported during OPSON VI showed that the participating countries dismantled at least seven organised crime groups, defined as such by the countries. The number might be bigger in reality, as some countries reported results suggesting the involvement of organised criminal groups.

- **Cohesive analytical feedback given to the countries**

Considering the integrated perspective on global food crime, the data reported during OPSON VI allowed for better analysis of trends and patterns, and for more comprehensive feedback to be given to the participating countries. Aucune entrée d'index n'a été trouvée.

6.2 Recommendations

In spite of some achievements, the review of OPSON VI leads to the conclusion that areas for improvement remain and concern:

- **Geographical gaps**

OPSON VI had the highest number of participating countries so far (65), distributed across regions as such: 8 countries from Asia-Pacific, 9 countries from the Americas, 15 from Africa, 31 from Europe and 2 countries from the Middle East. In this context, there is still a gap regarding food-crime information, especially concerning the Middle East, thus making the region a priority for OPSON.

- **The multi-agency approach**

Promoting joint action at the national level and a multi-agency approach, as shown by some of the countries during OPSON VI, would lead to enhanced immediate results in the short term and to a more integrated strategic approach on food-crime in the long term. INTERPOL and Europol will continue to increase efforts in identifying relevant actors, public and private, involved in the fight against food fraud.

- **Efforts in intelligence gathering regarding online food-related crimes**

As indicated in earlier editions of OPSON and confirmed by OPSON VI, the Internet is increasingly used for criminal activities, especially for selling all kinds of counterfeited goods. Food sold online is gaining more and more popularity. According to open-source information, online trade of food products accounts for about 40 billion USD worldwide, representing roughly 15% of the total food trade²⁶ and it is currently on the rise. In this context, a better intelligence gathering strategy targeting food sold online can widen the scope of future actions.

CONCLUSION

OPSON VI confirmed some of the conclusions laid down after OPSON V, especially with regard to the trends of alcohol smuggling *i.e.* this product remains of a high risk in terms of counterfeiting and revealed a clearer picture regarding the illicit flow of alcohol in Europe and around the world.

On the subject of olive oil, although the quantity reported during OPSON VI is smaller than the amount seized during OPSON V, counterfeiting olive oil seems to be a constant attraction for food crime especially in Italy, Spain and Greece.

Cases reported by the majority of participating countries illustrated the recurrence of certain *modi operandi*, such as mislabelling products in order to deceive consumers and to facilitate the marketing of illicit items. Europe was the main destination area for counterfeit food and drinks, with a focus on France and Spain. Regional flows inside Europe were also reported. Asia remained a major origin region during OPSON VI.

OPSON VI revealed a higher number of risk factors than other editions and prevented, at the consumer level, major health implications from the illicit food products, for instance by taking off the market foodstuffs infested with salmonella, *Listeria Monocytogenes* or foodstuff containing heavy metals and other hazardous substances.

The results, beyond the figures reported, led to picture a far more complex structure of the organised criminal groups involved in the traffic of food products. In this regard, a possibly increasing trend relates to the use of fake packaging materials for placing counterfeit products on the market for consumption, thus making their detection more difficult.

The OPSON Network continued to expand with new countries and newcomers from the private sector resulting in larger amounts of products seized and more coordinated law enforcement actions.

OPSON is a platform designed to build a network of experts on food fraud in order to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information in a timely manner. Its format should correspond to the needs and requests of the participating countries. This structure can be adapted, if needed, to meet the evolution of the actions undertaken by the countries against food crime.

Considering all the information above, the general assessment of OPSON is satisfactory, and leads to the conclusion that the initiative should be continued and enhanced.

²⁶ According to Kantar Worldpanel, a company involved in research regarding purchase behavior. Details available at <https://www.kantarworldpanel.com/global/News/Global-e-commerce-grocery-market-has-grown-15-to-48bn>. Nikkei Asian Review underlines the same idea, in an article published by Kosuke Okame regarding food sold on line. Details: <http://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Trends/13bn-in-fresh-food-sales-point-to-China-s-latest-online-headway>. Both links accessed on 16.11.2017.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Participating countries/agencies

Annex 2: Participation of the Private Sector

Annex 3: Detailed statistics

Annex 4: Europol Press release

Annex 5: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Annex 1: Participating countries/agencies

The following agencies/administrations of each country participated in OPSON VI.

In total, this represented 65 countries.

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Administrations/LEAs</i>
European Member States (Exchange of information via Europol)	
Austria – AT	Federal Police Customs Food Administration Vienna
Belgium - BE	Customs Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC)
Bulgaria – BG	Ministry of Interior: General Directorate of the National Police Customs Bulgarian Food Safety Agency
Croatia – HR	Customs
Cyprus – CY	Health services Police
Czech Republic – CZ	Customs Police State Veterinary Administration Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority
Denmark – DK	Veterinary and Food Administration
Finland - FI	Customs Finish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA)
France – FR	Customs Central Office for Coordinating Environment and Health Crime (OCLAESP – Police, Gendarmerie) Directorate for Competition, Consumption and Fraud Control (DGCCRF – Ministry of Finance) Food Directorate (Ministry of Agriculture)
Germany – DE	Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt) Central Customs Authority (Zoll) Food Control Authorities of the Federal States of Bavaria, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate. Food Control Authorities of the Federal States Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (observers)
Greece – GR	Financial Police Division - Hellenic Police Economic and Financial Crime (SDOE)
Hungary – HU	National Tax and Customs Authorities (NAV) International Law Enforcement Cooperation Centre (NEBEK)
Ireland – IE	Food Safety Authority of Ireland Customs Police (An Garda Síochána)
Italy – IT	Arma dei Carabinieri

	Guardia di Finanza Guardia Costiera Customs (Agenzia delle Dogane)
Latvia – LV	Customs Food and Veterinary services
Lithuania – LT	Customs State Food and Veterinary Service
The Netherlands – NL	Dutch Food and Product Authority (NVWA)
Poland – PL	Police National Food Safety Agency
Portugal – PT	Customs and Tax Authority Food and Economic Safety Agency (ASAE)
Romania – RO	Police
Spain – ES	Guardia Civil (Unidades de policía judicial, Servicio de protección de la naturaleza, costas y fronteras, Unidades de seguridad ciudadana) Regional Food Safety Agencies (Consejerías de Sanidad y de Alimentación de las Comunidades Autónomas) Customs
United Kingdom – UK	Intellectual Property Office (IPO) Food Standards Agency (FSA) – National Food Crime Unit Food Standards Scotland – Food Crime and Incidents Unit Welsh Food Fraud Coordination Unit UK Port Health Authorities Trading Standards Authorities (TSA) Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Police and Police Scotland National Crime Agency (NCA) Border Force (UKBF) Scottish Local Authority Environmental Health Marine Scotland Scottish Public Analysts Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority Immigration Enforcement
EU COM	DG Health
Third countries – Exchange of information via Europol (Operational agreements)	
Iceland – IS	Customs Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority
Norway – NO	Customs Norwegian Food Safety Authority
Switzerland – CH	Customs Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)
United States of America - USA	Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Third countries – Exchange of information via INTERPOL	

Albania – AL	Police
Argentina - AR	Police
Australia – AU	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Belarus – BY	Police Customs
Bolivia - BO	Police Customs Intendencia Municipal
Bosnia & Herzegovina – BA	Police Customs
Burundi – BI	Police Customs Public Health Bureau of Standards
Chile – CL	Policía de Investigaciones de Chile Jefatura Nacional de Delitos Económicos y Medio Ambiente- JENADEM.
China – CN	Police
Colombia – CO	Fiscal Police – National Police (Policía Nacional – Dirección de gestión de policía fiscal y aduanera)
Comoros – KM	Police
Côte d’Ivoire – CI	Police Customs Food Regulatory Authority
Dominican Republic – DO	Police
Ecuador – EC	Police Prosecution Office Ministry of Public Health and Agriculture
Eritrea – ER	Police Customs Directorate of Public Prosecutions
Fiji – FJ	Police
India	Police
Indonesia – ID	Police Customs National Agency of Food and Drug Control (NAFDC)
Iraq – IQ	Police
Jordan - JO	Police Customs Jordan Food and Drug Administration
Kenya – KE	Police Customs Kenya Bureau of Standards Anti-counterfeiting Agency Pharmacy and poison board

	Office of the director of public prosecution National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drugs Abuse
Moldova – MD	Inspectorate for Investigations of the General Police Inspectorate International Police Cooperation Centre of the General Police Inspectorate Direction Operational Management and regionals Police Inspectorates General Inspectorate of Border Police Customs Service National Food Safety Agency
Montenegro – ME	Police
Morocco – MA	Police
Nigeria – NG	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration (NAFDAC)
Peru – PE	Police Customs, Tax Administration Immigration
Philippines – PH	Police
Russia – RU	Police
Rwanda – RW	Police Customs Bureau of Standards Ministry of Health and Agriculture
Republic of Korea – KR	Korean National Police Agency Ministry of Food and Drug Safety
Seychelles – SC	Police National Drugs Enforcement Agency (NDEA) National Bureau of Standard, Health (Food Control Unit) Licensing Authority and Fair Trading Commission
Sudan – SD	Police Customs Public Prosecution Office Health and Safety Directorate
Tanzania – TZ	Police Customs Tanzania Food Drug Authority Tanzania Bureau of Standards Director of Public Prosecutions Fair Competition Commission
Thailand – TH	Police Customs Food Regulatory Authority
Togo – TG	Police Customs Ministry of Agriculture department
Uruguay – UY	Police

Vietnam – VN	Police Customs Ministry of Public Health Local Police forces (according to their provincial plan)
Zambia – ZM	Police Public Health Department of Lusaka City Council Food and Drug Laboratory, Ministry of Health Zambia Bureau of Standard

Annex 2: Participation of the private sector

20 firms and associations participated in OPSON VI.

Name and type	Types of products
CIVB Comité Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bordeaux (Bordeaux Wines Bureau)	Bordeaux Wines, protected by a geographical indication and trademarks
CIVC Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (Association of Champagne producers) – producers association	Sparkling Wine, protected by a geographical indication and trademarks
The Coca Cola Company – firm	Non-alcoholic beverages, trademarks protected
Colgate-Palmolive Company – firm	Healthcare products, especially dental care, trademarks protected ²⁷
Consorzio di tutela Gorgonzola DOP – producers association	Cheese, protected by a geographical indication
Consorzio di tutela Prosecco DOP – producers association	Sparkling wine, protected by a geographical indication
Unaprol Consorzio Olivicolo Italiano – producers association	Olive oil, especially extra virgin olive oil
Danone Group – firm	4 types of edible goods and beverages: fresh dairy products, waters, baby nutrition and medical nutrition, trademarks protected
Diageo plc – firm	Spirits and liquors, trademarks protected
Ferrero Spa – firm	Mainly confectionery, trademarks protected
IFSP International Federation of Spirits Producers – producers association	Spirits and liquors, trademarks protected
Mars – Firm	Various edible goods and drinks, ranging from chocolate, candies, pet food and rice, trademarks protected.
Moët Hennessy – firm	Champagnes, wines and spirits, trademarks and geographical indication protected
Mondelez International Inc.– firm	Confectionery and snacks, trademarks protected
Nestlé – firm	Mainly confectionery, trademarks protected
REACT – Association of right holders	Non-profit organisation defending the interests of more than 190 right holders, among them companies of the food industry
Red Bull – Firm	Energy drink, trademark protected

²⁷ Seized products infringing the rights of the Colgate Palmolive Company were considered as side seizures, as they were neither food nor beverages.

Scotch Whisky association – producers association	Scotch Whisky, trademark and geographical indication protected
Tequila Regulatory Council – producers association	Mexican liquor, geographical indication and trademarks protected
Unilever – Firm	Various edible goods ranging from ice creams to soups, tea, coffee and condiments, trademarks protected

Annex 3: Detailed statistics

The tables and charts below provide more information on previous editions as well as on the results of OPSON VI. The methodology on the statistic is explained in 4.1.

○ **Seizures since 2012 (OPSON II to OPSON VI)**

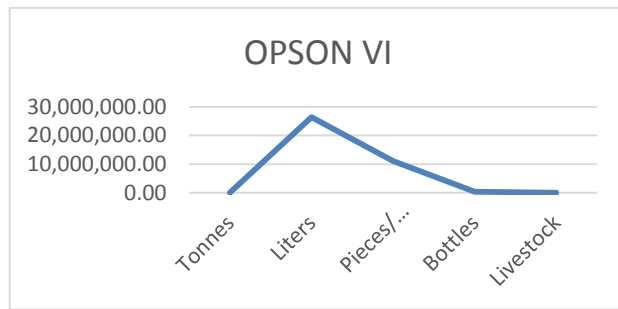
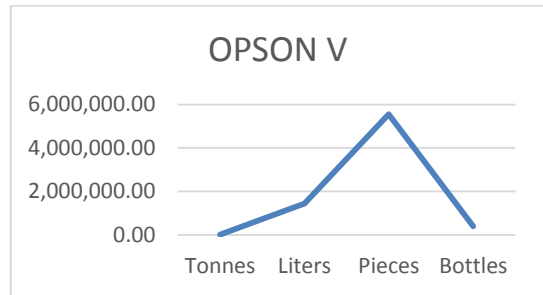
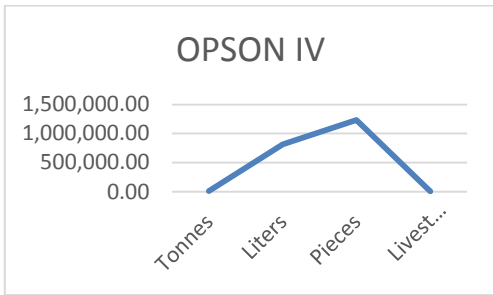
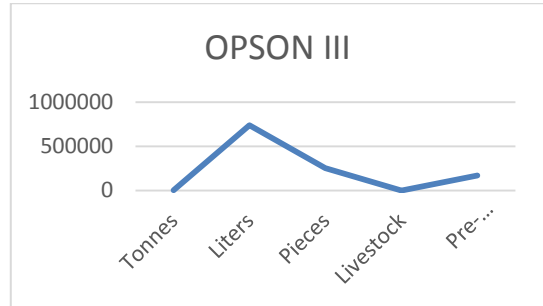
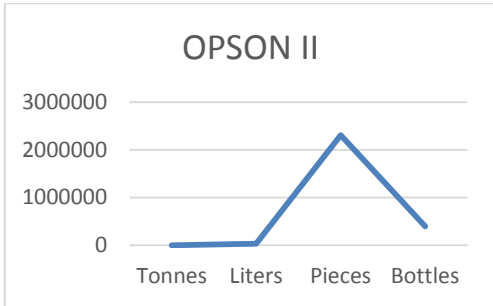
OPSON II - 29 countries	
<i>Unit of measurement</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Tonnes	262.86
Litres	35,702.48
Pieces	2,310,131
Bottles	394,763

OPSON III - 33 countries	
<i>Unit of measurement</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Tonnes	5,661.40
Litres	739,816.00
Pieces	255,082
Livestock	300
Pre-packaged items	170,175

OPSON IV - 47 countries	
<i>Unit of measurement</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Tonnes	11,591.77
Litres	814,563.19
Pieces	1,233,911
Livestock	6, 172

OPSON V – 57 countries	
<i>Unit of measurement</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Tonnes	11,131.18
Litres	1,449,056.4
Pieces	5,549,328
Bottles	394,763

OPSON VI – 65 countries	
<i>Unit of measurement</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Tonnes	13,407.60
Litres	26,336,305.3
Pieces/Units	11,118,832
Livestock	37,042



Charts 1

Number of products seized since OPSON II

o **Participating countries by region**

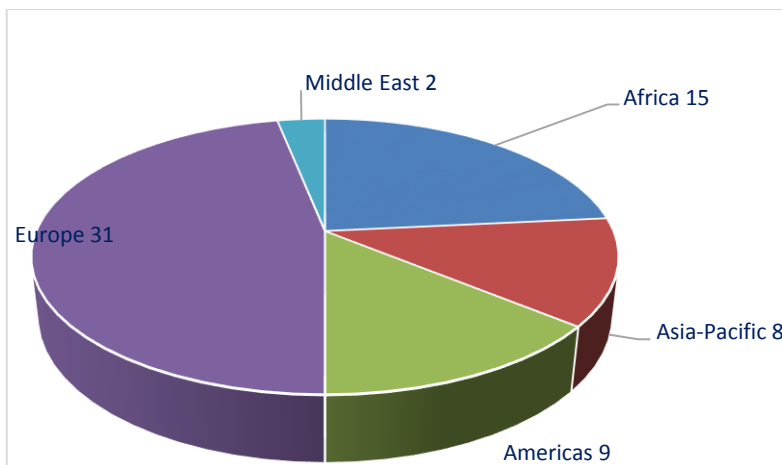


Chart 2

Participating countries in OPSON VI per region

○ **Types of products seized in the course of OPSON VI**

Category	Litres	Units/pieces	Tonnes
Non-alcoholic beverages	369,753.00	1,861,800.0	416.06
Alcoholic beverages	25,766,430.17	165,721.0	0.65
Fruits and vegetables	NA	36,712.0	3,083.54
Meat and meat products	NA	9,071.0	5,145.93
Seafood	NA	604,670.0	480.81
Dairy	57,670.6	9,547.0	137.63
Condiments	3,781.5	2,786,983.0	7.75
Cereals, grains and derived products	NA	524.0	1,374.96
Sugar and sweet products	NA	414,139.0	220.76
Cooking oil	84,404.0	124.0	18.80
Food supplements and additives	NA	3,052,635.0	6.23
Formula and powdered milk	NA	1,603.0	3.27
Livestock	NA	37,042.0	0.22
Other food and drinks	20,265.0	1,730,468.0	2,446.77
Pharmaceuticals	1,998.0	85,548.0	22.06
Tobacco products	NA	308,133.0	1.20
Non-food products (excl tobacco and pharmaceuticals)	32,003.0	14,186.0	40.97
Total	26,336,305.3	11,118,906.0	13,407.60

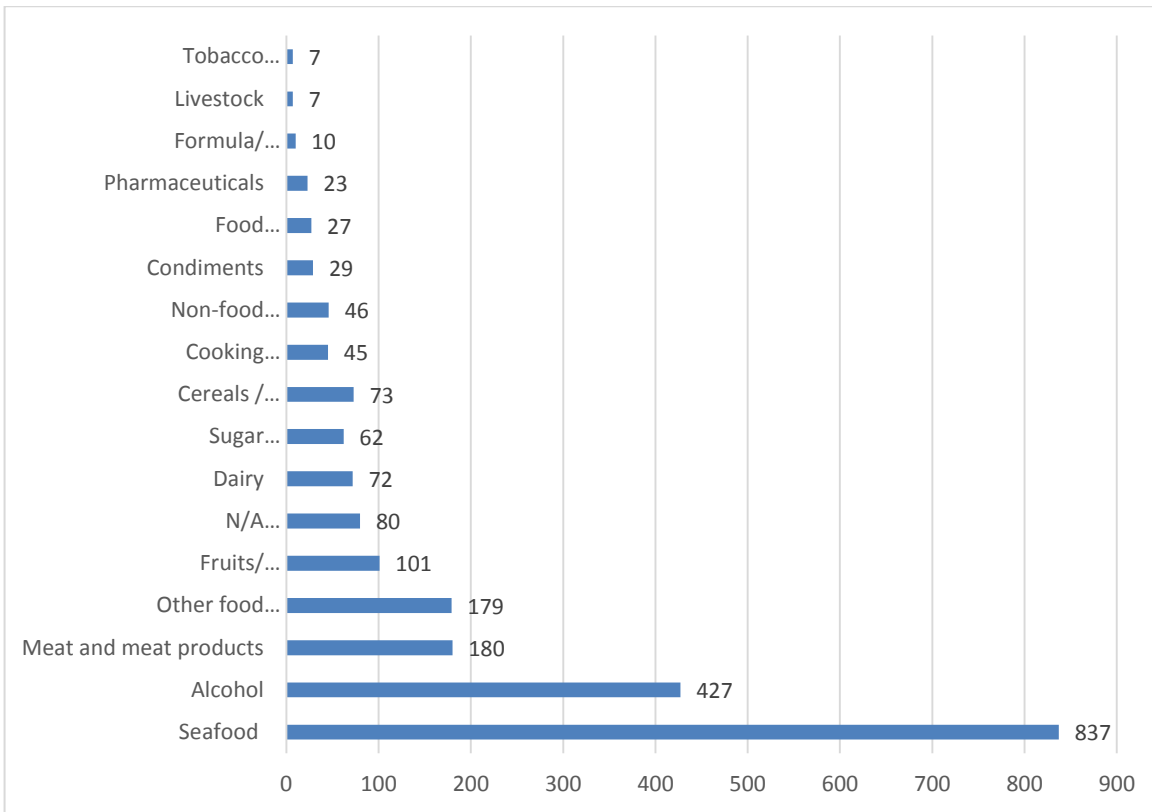


Chart 3

Proportion of goods seized by category (number of cases)

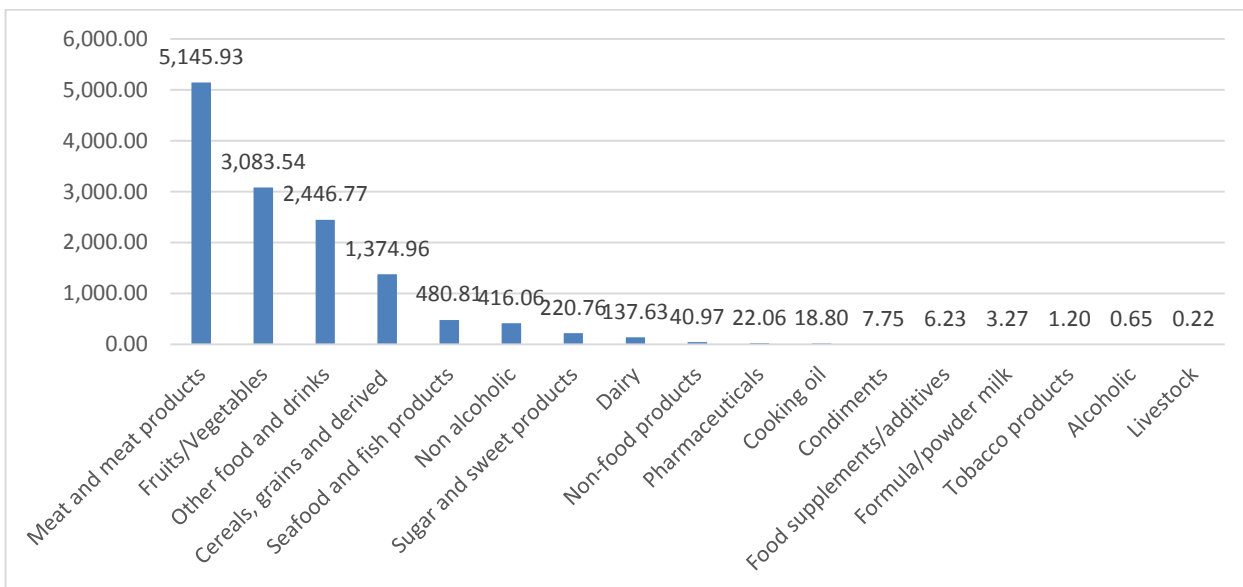


Chart 4

Proportion of goods seized (metric tonnes)

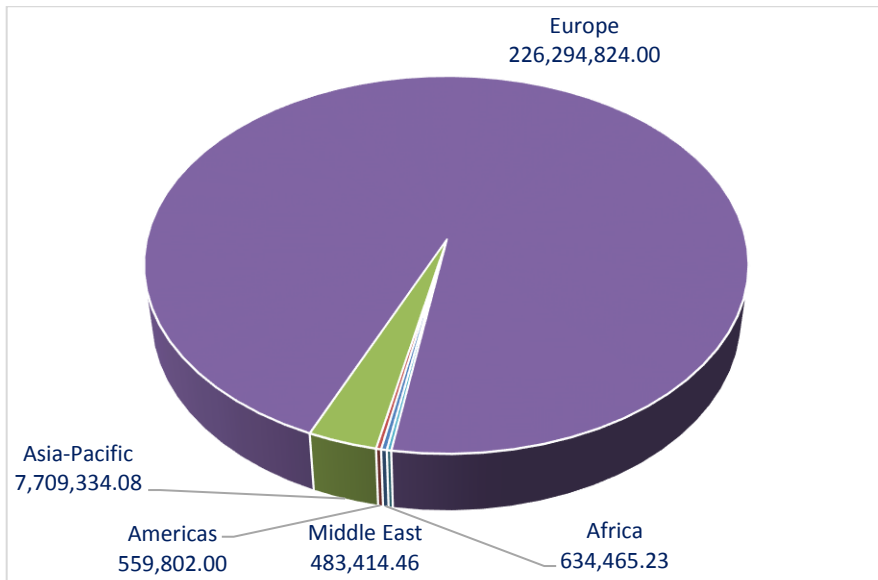


Chart 5

Estimated value of the seized products per region in Euros

○ **Arrested individuals**

In the framework of the operation, countries reported 13, 711 persons arrested or investigated. The chart below illustrates the number of arrests and detentions per geographical area.

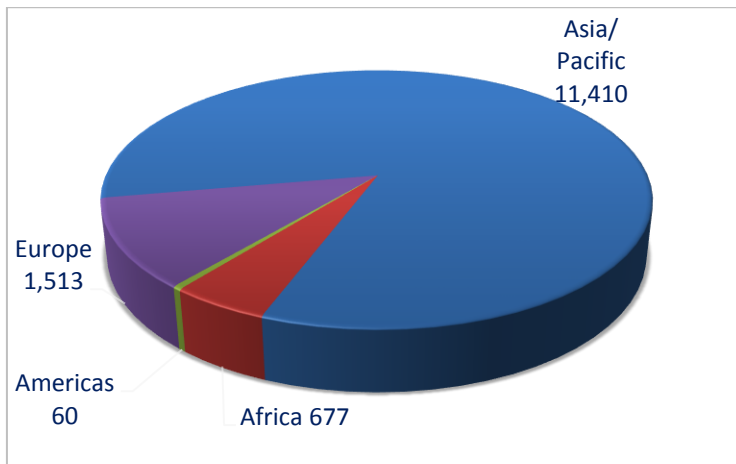


Chart 6

Arrested individuals per region

○ **Categories of products**

Name of Category	Examples of contents reported
Non alcoholic beverages	Juice, energy drinks, mineral water, soda, coconut water, aloe vera drinks, tea and unspecified juice
Alcoholic beverages	Raw/ethyl alcohol, champagne, whiskey, vodka, rum, wine, cognac, beer, brandy, home/locally made brews, alcohol cream and unspecified alcohol/spirits
Fruits/Vegetables/Legumes	Apples, asparagus, anchovy, beans, unspecified bulbs and tubers, citrus fruits, dates, raisins, durians, hazelnuts, radishes, onions, unspecified vegetables, legumes and fruits
Meat and meat products	Chicken, duck, frog, ham, turkey, lamb, pork, internal organs, minced/cured meat, meat for kebab/gyros, sausages unspecified meat, meat and meat products
Seafood	All types of fish (codfish, salmon, trout cuttlefish, eel), lobster, crab, octopus, oysters, shrimp, unspecified bivalve molluscs, fish and seafood
Dairy	Butter, cheese, cheese cream, milk, yogurt, unspecified dairy products
Condiments	Unspecified sauces, chili, curcuma, curry, salt, pepper, unspecified spices and condiments, excluding cooking oil.
Cereals, grains and derived products	Bread, cereal porridge, flour, wheat, rice, pastries, unspecified cereals and pasta
Sugar and sweet products	Biscuits, candies, chewing gum, chocolate/spread, confectionary, sweet syrups, halva, hazelnut paste, sugar, sponge cake
Cooking oil	Olive oil, sunflower oil, palm oil, unspecified cooking oil
Food supplements/additives	Unspecified food additives, dietary supplements, food, colorants, nutrition products
Formula/powder milk	Unspecified formula milk, baby drinks, powdered milk
Livestock	Chicken, cattle, any living animal intended for consumption
Other food and drinks	Coffee, tea bags, mixed quantities of fish and dairy, meat and cheese, cheese and salmon, assorted drinks, eggs, sausages and fried potatoes, unspecified food and drinks, preserved food, other mixed types of food
Pharmaceuticals	Antibiotics, analgesics, gastro-intestinal, ointments, medical equipment and supplies
Tobacco products	Cigarettes and raw tobacco
Non-food products (side seizures)	Bricks, bathing suits, candles, car spare parts, cosmetics, diapers, mobile phone accessories, shoes, women handbags, watches

Annex 4: INTERPOL/Europol press release

Published on 25/04/2017

Operation OPSON VI, the joint Europol-INTERPOL operation targeting counterfeit and substandard food and drink, as well as the organised crime networks behind this illicit trade, has resulted in the seizure of **9 800 tonnes, over 26.4 million litres, and 13 million units/items** worth an estimated **EUR 230 million** of potentially harmful food and beverages ranging from every day products such as alcohol, mineral water, seasoning cubes, seafood and olive oil, to luxury goods such as caviar.

This year, 61 countries (21 EU Member States) took part in operation OPSON VI, which was carried out for the sixth time in a row and saw an increase in participating countries (57 countries in 2016). Each participating country implemented a national operational phase between 1 December 2016 to 31 March 2017, involving police, customs, national food regulatory bodies and partners from the private sector. More than 50 000 checks were carried out at shops, markets, airports, seaports and industrial estates.

"OPSON VI confirmed the threat that food fraud represents, as it affects all types of products and all regions of the world. In addition we saw some new trends such as counterfeit mineral water. Once again the good cooperation on a European and global level was paramount to disrupt the criminal gangs behind the illicit trade in counterfeit and unregulated food and drink," said Chris Vansteenkiste, head of Europol's Intellectual Property Crime Coordinated Coalition - IPC3.

"This operation has once again shown that criminals will fake any type of food and drink with no thought to the human cost as long as they make a profit. Whilst thousands of counterfeit goods have been taken out of circulation, we continue to encourage the public to remain vigilant about the products they buy," said Françoise Dorcier, Coordinator of INTERPOL's Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme.

The annual operation coordinated by Europol and INTERPOL is supported by customs, police and national food regulatory bodies in addition to partners from the private sector. Since its first edition in 2011, the number of countries taking part in OPSON has grown every year.

Source URL:

<https://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2017/N2017-052>

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/eur-230-million-worth-of-fake-food-and-beverages-seized-in-global-opson-operation-targeting-food-fraud> (accessed 16.11.2017).

Annex 5: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronyms	
EU MS	European Union Member State
EMPACT	European Multi-disciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threat
IPR	Intellectual Property Right
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
NCP	National Contact Point
OCG	Organised Criminal Group
Organisations and Institutions	
EU	European Union
EU COM	European Commission
DG SANTÉ	Directorate General Health & Consumers
INTERPOL IGGH	INTERPOL Illicit Goods and Global Health Programme