

# Foreword

Illicit trade in fake goods is a significant and growing threat in a globalised and innovation-driven economy, undermining good governance, the rule of law and citizens' trust in government. It not only has a negative impact on the sales and profits of affected firms and on the economy in general, but also poses major health and safety threats to consumers.

To provide policy makers with solid empirical evidence about this threat, the OECD and the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) joined forces to carry out a series of analytical studies that deepen our understanding of the scale and magnitude of the problem. The results have been published in a set of reports starting with *Trade in Counterfeit and Pirated Goods: Mapping the Economic Impact* (2016), and including the most recent ones *Trends in Trade in Counterfeit and Pirated Goods* (2019), and *Illicit Trade in Counterfeit Pharmaceuticals* (2020).

The results are worrying. Trade in counterfeit and pirated goods amounted to up to 3.3 % of world trade in 2016; when considering only imports into the EU, fake goods amounted to up to 6.8 % of imports. Counterfeiters operate swiftly in the globalised economy, misusing modern logistical solutions and legitimate trade facilitation mechanisms and thrive in economies lacking good governance standards.

Evidence shows that, while criminals continue to use all available modes of transport for illicit trade, seizures from commercial maritime container shipping continue to dominate in terms of volume and value of goods seized. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the problem: criminal networks have reacted very quickly to the crisis and adapted their strategies to take advantage of the shifting landscape.

This study provides a detailed analysis of economy- and industry-specific patterns in the misuse of containerised maritime transport by counterfeiters. Such information is crucially needed, not only for better understanding this threat, but also for developing effective governance responses to support post-COVID recovery.

This study was carried out under the auspices of the OECD's Task Force on Countering Illicit Trade, which focuses on evidence-based research and advanced analytics to assist policy makers in mapping and understanding the vulnerabilities exploited and created by illicit trade.

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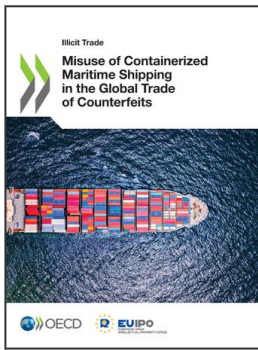
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