



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OPERATION STOP III

IPR, HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAMME

Removing counterfeits from e-commerce

June 2024



Aim and concept

Operation STOP III demonstrated our commitment to addressing the new global challenge posed by e-commerce.

In the face of the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Customs Organization (WCO) has been conducting operations under the codename “STOP” since 2020.

Although the world has bounced back from the pandemic, the increasing sophistication and adaptability of illicit trade networks are presenting new global challenges in the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR).

Based on the analysis of data from recent WCO operations under the Organization’s IPR, Health and Safety Programme, it appears that e-commerce should be a top priority for future action.

Scope

Operation STOP III focused on intercepting and seizing fake or substandard medicines, medical devices, vaccines as well as any other products for everyday consumption, sold via e-commerce, that might infringe IPR, in particular, consumer products affecting citizens’ health and safety.

Participants

- The WCO Secretariat coordinated Operational Coordination Unit (OCU) in close cooperation with the WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) network.
- A total of 111 Members confirmed their support for the operation.
- Our partners in INTERPOL, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), along with private-sector entities, provided support for this operation.

Duration

Operation Phase of STOP III took place between 4 and 15 December 2023.

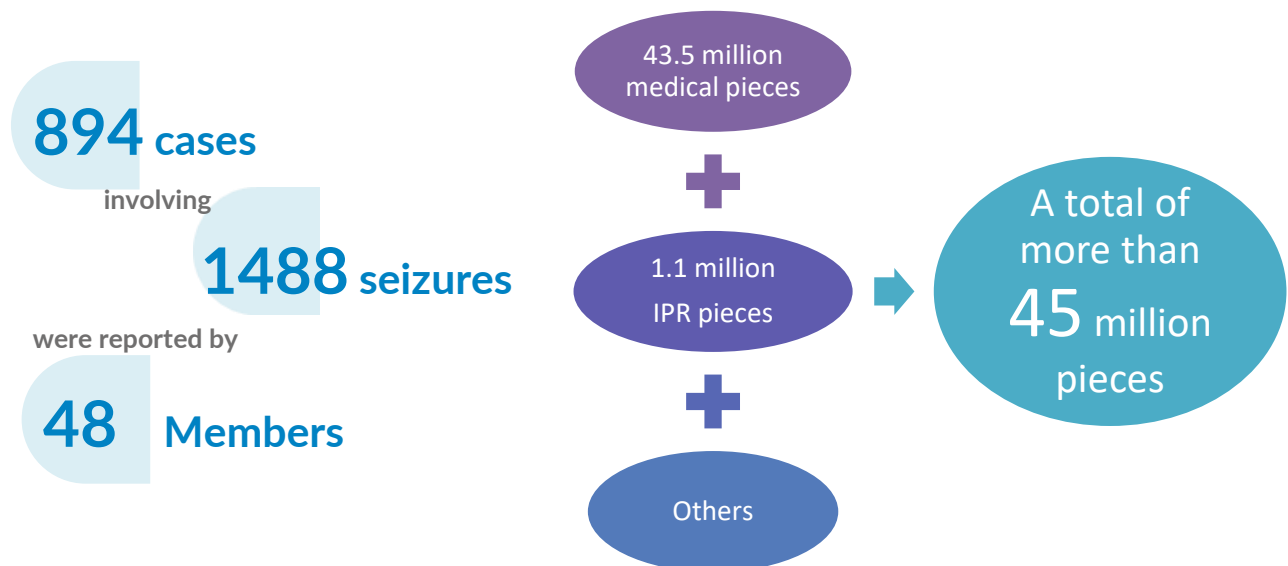
Events

- Four pre-operational regional online workshops, each lasting two days, were held for Members with the support of the RILOs, INTERPOL and the IOC, attended by some 230 participants.
- The workshops included awareness raising campaigns on e-commerce with the support of nineteen rightsholders and online platform operators.

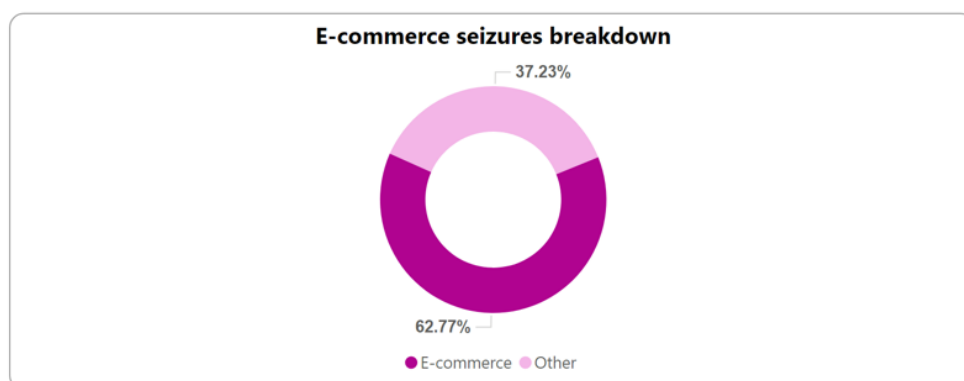
WCO tools and instruments

- STOP III used the WCO secured communication platform, CENcomm which enabled Members to exchange information in a real time manner. Information and materials provided by rights holders and other stakeholders were available on the platform.
- Daily data visualization provided participating Members with real-time insights into the progression of seizures and emerging trends.

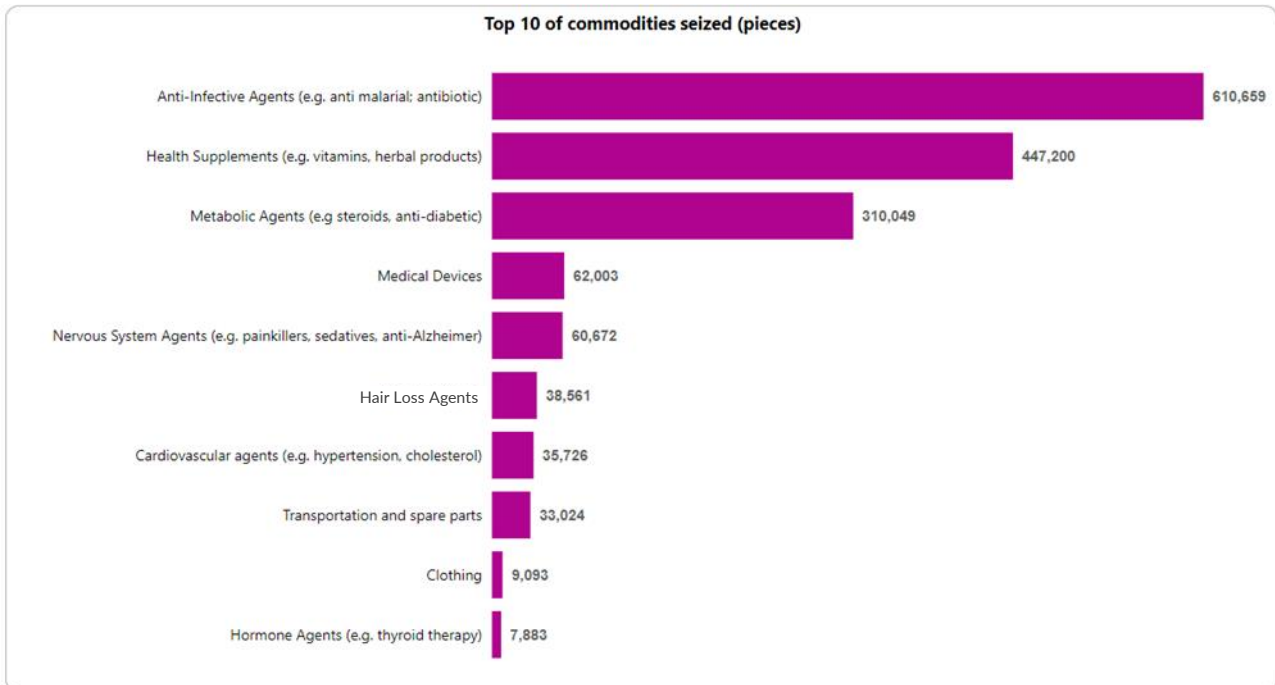
Key figures



Findings on e-commerce



- All six WCO regions have reported cases linked to e-commerce.
- Of all reported seizures, e-commerce accounted for around 63%.
- This significant percentage demonstrates that Members have a comprehensive understanding of the operation's scope.



- The most reported category via the e-commerce channel was clothing, followed by footwear. Among the medicine and pharmaceutical products, nervous system agents were the most reported commodities.
- In terms of quantity, reports regarding medicine and pharmaceutical products were notable. Anti-infective agents came first, and medicine and pharmaceutical products accounted for the top three of all reports. Among IPR-related products, transportation and spare parts were the most reported commodities.

Way forward

- Improve the risk assessment criteria in response to the trends observed during the operation.
- Work with other stakeholders on the operation results to gain a broader perspective on the way forward.
- Promote greater interaction by national contact points with right holders.
- Work with other stakeholders on the operation results to gain a broader perspective on the way forward.
- Promote the use of WCO tools and instruments.
- Raise awareness of the importance of IPR enforcement.