

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002869/25
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(14 July 2025)

Subject: Actions to tackle the misuse of geographical indications and the production and distribution of counterfeit products

Products with geographical indications such as olive oil, meat, cheese, dairy products and beverages such as beer and wine are particularly vulnerable to counterfeiting. For example, alcoholic beverages have one of the highest counterfeiting rates compared to other products, with annual losses of EUR 2 289 million in sales and almost 5 700 jobs in the EU. In Greece alone, EUR 49 million in sales and over 200 jobs are lost in this sector every year. According to Europol, ⁽¹⁾ criminals forge labels and packaging and adapt production processes, while counterfeit products containing dangerous substances have also been seized. These phenomena cause irreparable harm to producers and pose a significant risk to consumer health.

In light of the above:

1. How does the Commission intend to tackle imports of such products while ensuring a level playing field for European producers?
2. What measures does the Commission intend to put in place to tackle the misuse of geographical indications and to strengthen cross-border cooperation and enforcement of anti-counterfeiting legislation?

Submitted: 14.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(12 September 2025)

1. The Commission acknowledges the concerns raised on the misuse and counterfeiting of geographical indications, which have significant economic and health implications.

While the responsibility for controls lies with the Member States, the Commission works with them to enhance the effectiveness of controls and ensure consistent enforcement across the EU. Regarding the misuse of geographical indications, Regulation (EU) No 2024/1143 ⁽¹⁾ provides a robust framework for their protection.

This protection also applies to goods in transit, sold by means of distance selling, such as electronic commerce and intended for export.

2. The Commission takes a comprehensive approach to enforcing intellectual property rights, including geographical indications, both in the EU and globally. It coordinates efforts between Member States and relevant agencies by sharing best practices, providing technical assistance and supporting joint operations to combat counterfeiting, while the Commission Recommendation on combating counterfeiting provides guidance to Member States and stakeholders to prevent, detect and respond to counterfeiting activities.

The Commission engages with international partners through trade agreements and intellectual property dialogues and working groups to ensure effective, adequate protection and enforcement. It also operates various EU-funded technical assistance and international cooperation programmes to strengthen the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, in third countries.

Moreover, Europol supports law enforcement cooperation against food counterfeiting: in 2024 an EU-wide operation took off the market EUR 91 million worth of counterfeit and substandard food ⁽²⁾.

¹ Report by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) on the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment in the European Union for 2025 (SOCTA).

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialties guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024).

⁽²⁾ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/eur-91-million-worth-of-counterfeit-and-substandard-food-seized-in-europe-wide-operation>.