

Press release

Infarmed and Autoridade Tributária e Aduaneira (Tax and Customs Office)

More than 460 thousand illegal units of medicines were seized in 2016

More than 460 thousand units of drugs were retained, returned or destroyed in 2016, under the collaboration protocol between Infarmed and the competent Tax and Customs Office – Autoridade Tributária e Aduaneira. This balance sheet (see annex) on the illegal circuit of drugs (and not the legal, which involves the pharmacies) is once again an alert on the need to stick the *online shopping* to *sites* authorized by Infarmed.

In 2016, **460 936 units were seized**, 24 250 of which under the international operation Pangea. In 2012, the seizure involved 351 123 units, including 33 658 from the operation coordinated by Interpol and the World Customs Organization. Excluding the data from the operation PANGAEA, the number of packages and opinions decreased during this period. However, the number of units involved was greater.

In 2016 there was a greater **percentage of products that have been destroyed, which rose from 7.2% to 11% of the total units in a year**. These medicinal products are of higher risk, falsified or suspected of forgery, therefore the quality, efficacy and safety are not guaranteed. The majority of the packages (73% of the total) are sent back to the origin.

Over the last five years, the **Infarmed's Laboratory** analysed 315 products suspected of tampering and/or forgery that were intercepted, 62% of which were considered illegal drugs.

In the operation PANGAEA in 2016, 57 products were analysed by the lab, 24 (42%) of which were counterfeit medicines and/or illegal.

UNITED STATES WITH LARGER VOLUME OF ORDERS; PAINKILLERS ARE THE MOST PURCHASED

INFARMED also identified changes in the consumption patterns. Since then, **the analgesics were the class of drugs most gained**, rising from 6% to 16% of the total. In 2012, the erectile dysfunction dominated the list of drugs seized in the customs.

The United States became the country with the largest volume of purchases, in part due to the greater confidence in the quality of consumers. However, in areas such as erectile dysfunction, countries like India or Singapore are still dominating the volume of acquisitions. The main sellers of medicinal products used for weight loss are Brazil, India or China.

Infarmed aligned with Europe in consumer protection

Press release

The forgery and counterfeiting of medicines is a global problem. In addition to the global strategy, - the operation Pangea is just an example that involved more than 100 countries in 2016 - Infarmed has taken a series of measures which are included in the "Strategy against Counterfeit Medicines 2016-2020".

The protocol with the Tax and Customs Office, which allowed the confiscation of 1.86 million units of drugs over the past four years, is just one that were defined at the national level, along with the agreement with ASAE on food supplements.

At international level, Infarmed joined the working group responsible for MEDICRIME, against counterfeiting of medical products, and has supported the adoption of preventive measures and the criminalization of conduct associated with counterfeiting and forgery, investing also in awareness campaigns for citizens.

The project Fakeshare, which alert to the proliferation of websites that sell potentially illegal and/or counterfeited drugs, supported by the EU, also follows these principles.

The regulator of medicines is also participating in working groups that joint national medicines authorities, the Council of Europe and the World Health Organization.

Annex 1: DRUGS INTERCEPTED IN PORTUGAL (EXCLUDING PANGAEA)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total of opinions	4202	5088	5731	8043	6566
Packaging retained or returned to sender	27321	0		25306	15532
Units retained or returned to sender	0	350085	476829	619980	436686

Infarmed's Press Office

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