

## **They sold steroids worth PLN 5.4 million by mail order to dozens of countries**

**The Central Bureau of Police Investigation (pol: Centralne Biuro Śledcze Policji), together with the District Prosecutor's Office in Gliwice, detained seven people suspected of participating in an organised criminal group which manufactured and marketed, among other things, anabolic steroids, hormones and growth factors. Investigators were supported by the Polish Anti-Doping Agency (POLADA). The criminals distributed their goods via online shops, which processed over 25,000 orders worth PLN 4.8 million. Mail order sales were conducted from Poland to to at least 30 countries in Europe, as well as in North America, South America, Asia, Australia and Oceania.**

Police officers from Central Bureau of Investigation of the Police in Katowice, with the support of officers from the Central Bureau of Investigation of the Police in Poznań and experts from the Polish Anti-Doping Agency, under the supervision of the District Prosecutor's Office in Gliwice, carried out operations targeting an organised criminal group. The action took place in the Silesian and Lower Silesian provinces.

The gang had been operating since 2018 and was involved in the production in Poland of substances banned in sport, including anabolic-androgenic steroids, peptide hormones, growth factors, related substances and mimetics, but also hormone and metabolism modulators, using products and intermediates imported from China. These substances were then distributed. According to the investigators, the group also imported other medicinal products from Asia, not included in the 'Register of Medicinal Products Authorised for Trade on the Territory of the Republic of Poland', including those withdrawn from the market due to identified adverse reactions. As it was established, the distributed medicines did not comply with the legally binding quality conditions and could cause danger to the health and life of many people.

Investigators' findings indicate that the substances were sold via at least two online shops, with a total value of over PLN 5.4 million. Investigators also established that the shops processed more than 25,000 orders worth more than PLN 4.8 million. Mail order sales were conducted from Poland to other European countries, as well as to at least 30 countries in North America, South America, Asia, and Australia and Oceania.

A search of the warehouse and the place of production revealed ready-made agents in the form of tablets and ampoules, as well as 37 1 and 2 litre bottles with substances prepared to be placed in ampoules. Their market value was estimated at over half a million zlotys. Also secured were devices used for manufacturing tablets, capping glass vials and empty ampoules and caps. As it was established, a significant part of the secured products contained substances included in the group of anabolic steroids causing a number of side effects for health, the consumption of which in large quantities may lead to disruption of the proper functioning of the organism.

The suspects were led to the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Gliwice, where they were charged with participating in an organised criminal group, including one with leading that group. The remaining charges related to acts prohibited under the Act on Combating Doping in Sport and the Pharmaceutical Law, as well as bringing about danger to the health and life of many people and laundering money obtained from criminal activity.

The suspects face a penalty of up to 15 years' imprisonment. At the prosecutor's request, the court provisionally arrested all of them.

The case is evolving.

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