

“Smuggling is organized crime!”
A new anti-smuggling campaign and a new donation for canine teams

Giurgiu, September 17, 2019 – The national campaign ***“Smuggling is organized crime!”***, aimed at the awareness of the negative effects of this phenomenon, was launched in Giurgiu at a press conference attended by Eugen Teodorovici, the Minister of Public Finance.

Launched in partnership with the National Agency for Fiscal Administration (ANAF), the General Customs Directorate (DGV), the Border Police and with JTI's support through www.faracontrabanda.ro, the campaign will be developed during September – October in the border counties, which are the most affected by the illicit trade, and in Bucharest, on TVR (the Romanian National Television) and its regional channels, on billboards located in the border area, in airports, the subway and online. It is the eighth public anti-contraband campaign of this sort. Further materials and information can be accessed at www.faracontrabanda.ro and www.facebook.com/faracontrabanda.ro.

“The message outlines that the smuggling phenomenon is part of organized crime, alongside trafficking of illicit drugs, arms or humans, as well as tax evasion”, stated **Alexandru Lupu, a representative of Communicator Media, the campaign's developer.**

At the launch, JTI Romania announced that the partnership for supporting the canine teams will continue based on the Cooperation Protocol initiated in 2005 with ANAF and carried further with the Customs. Thus, 11 more dogs shall be instructed at the Centre for Canine Teams Training and Training Maintenance in Giurgiu, to obtain afterwards a triple specialization – cigarette, drugs and money detection. The canine mobile teams, consisting of a customs inspector and a dog, operate at border points located throughout the country and are part of the operative means used by DGV to prevent and fight cigarette smuggling, drug trafficking and tax evasion.

“Dogs are the best example for humans in regard of loyalty and dedication at the workplace. They are a presence that discourages smugglers and an efficient tool for fighting this phenomenon. They deserve the best care and training conditions”, stated **Eugen Teodorovici, Minister of Public Finance.**

Since 2010, JTI Romania has supported the establishment of over 50 canine teams, donating to the Customs Authority dogs, food, and necessary equipment.

The value of the goods confiscated by the canine teams from DGV between 2013 – 2019 exceeds 40 million RON. Last year alone, the canine teams have seized goods and contributed to the application of fines amounting to 10.3 million RON.

“Over time, ANAF, acting with the General Customs Directorate, has made consistent efforts to fight tobacco smuggling, particularly by developing the structure of the canine teams. During the first eight months of 2019, the customs surveillance and control teams have managed to confiscate 26,615,044 cigarettes and apply fines amounting to 3,225,010 RON. We are glad to know that JTI is a trusted partner in strengthening the control capacities and protecting the national and Community economic and security interests” stated the **Vice-president of ANAF, Ștefan Cosmin Doliș.**

“Dogs are incorruptible, and the results of these teams represent an undisputable proof. The training of a team starts with an initial stage of ten weeks, followed by other training improvement and maintenance stages. Once they are entrusted to a customs inspector, the dog shall become family, and after the dogs are withdrawn from service, they usually end up in the family of the leading inspector. It is teamwork, and for the customs inspectors we are preparing, it comes with a long-term responsibility”, explains **Alexandru Ioniță, head of Canine Teams Centre.**

“The increase of the efforts designed to fight cigarette contraband might bring significant resources for the State budget, while the actions developed by the authorities with the support of the private sector are starting to become visible. The last Novel study has shown that the black market has dropped below 14 percent for the first time in the last six years. We believe that these results have also been driven by a higher awareness degree in relation to the negative effects of smuggling due to consistent public campaigns”, stated **Gilda Lazăr, Corporate Affairs & Communications Director at JTI Romania, Moldova, and Bulgaria.**

According to the Novel data, in July 2019 the cigarette black market reached 13.7 percent of the total consumption. The illicit cigarette trade is causing a loss of approximately half a billion Euro to the State revenues yearly.