



**GENERAL INSPECTORATE OF THE BORDER
POLICE**

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**Border Police endowed with new State-of-the-Art equipment for combating
cigarette smuggling**

Bucharest, March 20, 2019: The Border Police shall be provided with new equipment as necessary for the surveillance and control of the State border in order to improve the efficiency of their actions against cigarette smuggling, as a result of a donation made by Japan Tobacco International-Romania under a cooperation partnership between the two organizations.

JTI Romania has donated to the General Inspectorate of the Border Police four **State-of-the-Art drones**, which shall be used in the jurisdiction of the Territorial Inspectorates of the Border Police of Sighetu Marmatiei and Iasi, and of the Coast Guard. The drones have high-quality technical features allowing increased flight autonomy and will help to monitor the border more efficiently.

Additionally, the donation includes night vision binoculars, endoscopes and tool kits useful for discovering improvised compartments designed for concealing illegal cigarettes or illegal drugs and arms. Additional equipment will include electric screwdrivers, whistles against wild animals, fuel pumps, manometers for measuring wheel pressure and air compressors for inflating wheels, as well as video cameras to be installed on the cars of the police officers, who are often involved in car chases on the road. The manometer for measuring pressure indicates whether the wheels are inflated with air or filled with cigarettes, given that in many cases cigarettes are transported over the border hidden inside the tires of cars.

“As a result of the donation announced today, which is part of a broader collaboration with JTI, our actions to combat smuggling will be streamlined. Combating and reducing the phenomenon of cigarette smuggling is a priority for the Border Police, given that the tobacco sector is the second-largest taxpayer to the State budget. Illegal trade not only harms revenues to the budget but represents a real danger to society, fuelling felonies and organized crime. Over the past year, as a result of deployed actions, the border police officers have seized over 4.7 million smuggled cigarette packs, worth about 41.5 million RON, as well as large quantities of tobacco. Also, 18 groups involving 160 people organized to commit cigarette smuggling were identified and de-structured”, stated the **head of the Border Police, Chief Commissioner Adrian Popescu**.

“We intend to continue this project of endowing the Border Police with modern equipment, a project that is part of the anti-contraband program series that we have been running for years in partnership with the authorities. This year we are hoping also to donate to the law enforcement authorities a verification hall located at the Siret Customs Point upon entering the country. After the completion of the construction, the hall will be equipped for the detailed verification of lightweight vehicles and cars. Since 2010, we have donated to the Romanian Customs more than 50 dogs trained to detect illegally trafficked cigarettes, as well as vehicles specially equipped for transporting canine teams. Since 2011, we have been running public awareness campaigns on the negative effects of smuggling in partnership with the Customs and Border Police. In order to reduce illicit trafficking, however, several regulatory changes are necessary that we, together with law enforcement authorities, have been unsuccessfully requesting for years. Thus, in addition to the unitary regulation based on quantity criteria of cigarette smuggling, it is necessary to intensify the operations at the internal border crossing points of the EU, with Bulgaria and Hungary - access points for "cheap white" products and raw tobacco, as well as to set specific tasks for the local police and the gendarmerie, as the illicit cigarette trade is almost unfettered in their jurisdiction - markets, fairs, underground stations”, stated **Gilda Lazăr, Corporate Affairs & Communications Director at JTI Romania, Moldova and Bulgaria.**

CIGARETTE SMUGGLING IN 2018

- The review of cross-border criminal phenomena recorded at the border between Romania and the neighbouring countries has shown that illegal trafficking of smuggled cigarettes and other fast moving consumer goods/subject to excises represents **one of the main forms of organized crime at Romania’s borders**, a phenomenon prevalent throughout the whole country.
- **The surveillance and control of the border in the area of competence is carried out at the European standards**, and the forces and the technical means used by the Romanian Border Police play an important role in this respect.
- Considering that smuggled cigarettes generally come from neighbouring countries, **Romania collaborates with the neighbouring border authorities and similar institutions from other States** to combat this phenomenon, as their aim is common, namely to ensure the safety and security of their citizens at Community levels.
- In 2018, **68 economic and financial crimes and 1,131 offences of smuggling and customs fraud were found**, the value of confiscated goods being **152.5 million RON**. Approximately **400 people** were found crossing or attempting to cross the border, illegally carrying goods that were smuggled or illegally trafficked. Also, **4.7 million cigarette packs** with an approximate value of **41.5**

million RON, over 183.3 kg of tobacco, and 1,223 kg of hookah tobacco were seized, with **18 groups organized** for cigarette smuggling purposes, in which **160 persons** were involved, having been identified and dismantled.

- In most cases, cigarettes have been detected both at border crossing points, hidden in the means of transport, at the green border, as well as in the competence area, on communications located near the border. Cigarettes were purchased without legal documents with the intention of marketing them on the domestic markets.
- **The people involved in illegal cigarette trafficking are primarily citizens of** Romania, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, but also of other countries such as Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Turkey, Austria, Germany, and Hungary, who were penalized or are under criminal investigation according to the legal provisions.
- At the crossing points of the borders with non-EU countries, the border police acts to fight the cross-border criminal phenomenon together with customs officers of the General Customs Directorate of the National Agency for Fiscal Administration.
- The complexity of this cross-border criminal phenomenon requires - in addition to other organizational, institutional, regulatory and logistic measures - the enhancement of the cooperation of all institutions involved in ensuring public order and efficiently combating the criminal phenomenon internally.
- The Romanian Border Police operates in an integrated system with other structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as with other State institutions involved in the field of taxation and combating smuggling, counterfeiting and illegal trade in tobacco products.