



# ILLICIT TRADE IN NUMBERS

## A SIZEABLE GLOBAL ISSUE

**\$1.6 – \$2.2**  
TRILLION TRILLION

worth of illicit products flow globally from cross-border criminal operations, such as the smuggling of arms, tobacco, or pharmaceuticals.<sup>1</sup>

UP TO **2.3 PERCENT**

of world trade is estimated to be counterfeit and pirated products, equivalent to up to

**\$467**  
BILLION<sup>2</sup>

## TOBACCO: ONE OF THE MOST ILLEGALLY TRAFFICKED GOODS IN THE WORLD

**14–15 PERCENT**

of tobacco products consumed globally every year are illicit, close to

**500 BILLION CIGARETTES<sup>3</sup>**

The value of illicit tobacco trade is estimated to be greater than that of oil, wildlife, timber, arts and cultural property, and diamonds combined.

**\$40 BILLION TO \$50 BILLION** are lost globally every year in tax revenues due to illicit tobacco trade.<sup>4</sup>

## A HIGH-PROFIT, LOW-RISK COMMODITY FOR CRIMINALS

**\$0.20**

Estimated cost to produce one illicit pack of cigarettes.

**\$100,000**

Cost of smuggled container of 10 million illicit cigarettes.

**\$2,300,000**

Potential profit to smugglers from one container of illicit cigarettes.

## ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE: A PROBLEM WITH FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES



Exposes consumers to unregulated products, often manufactured in sub-standard, unsanitary conditions



Undermines efforts to reduce smoking prevalence and protect youth from smoking



Hurts government tax revenues



Harms legitimate businesses and trade



Encourages corruption and threatens the rule of law



Finances transnational criminal organizations

<sup>1</sup> Munich Security Conference (MSC), Transnational Security Report, 2019. <sup>2</sup> OECD/EUIPO (2025), Mapping Global Trade in Fakes 2025: Global Trends and Enforcement Challenges, OECD Publications and European Union Intellectual Property Office. <sup>3</sup> PMI estimate based on Euromonitor and WHO statistics.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State, The Global Illicit Trade in Tobacco: A Threat to National Security, 2015.