

Press Release - Counterfeit drugs with no active ingredients

Press release, 18.10.2013

Major haul for Zurich airport customs: thanks to good cooperation between Swiss authorities, a sizeable load of counterfeit psychotropic drugs was seized at the airport. The haul contained more than a million anti-anxiety tablets. The drugs were intercepted in transit between China and Egypt.

The four crates containing the counterfeit drugs weigh over 400 kilograms. The Swiss customs authorities informed Swissmedic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, which then intercepted the shipment and requested samples. Analyses in the Swissmedic laboratory revealed that the drugs, which are prescribed to treat symptoms of acute anxiety, contained no active ingredients whatsoever. According to experts, the drugs would be unrecognisable as counterfeits at a first glance.

Drugs destroyed

Swissmedic immediately informed international authorities, in particular the Egyptian and Chinese health authorities.

At the same time, Swissmedic initiated administrative proceedings and ordered the destruction of the drugs.

The seized tablets were counterfeits of the "Xanax" compound made by Pfizer.

No patients in Switzerland are affected by this development. All medicines obtained via legal means (from pharmacies, doctors and hospitals) are safe, effective and of good quality.

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