



Anti-counterfeiting and Online Brand Enforcement: Global Guide

2026

**Greece: border measures, market
actions and online protection**

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Greece: border measures, market actions and online protection

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PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND STRATEGIES

Greece has significantly strengthened anti-counterfeiting enforcement in recent years. Greek authorities, particularly the Interagency Unit for Market Control (DIMEA), Customs authorities and the Hellenic Police, have intensified both physical and online market inspections, increasingly relying on administrative enforcement measures, expedited destruction procedures and cross-border cooperation with EU institutions such as the EUIPO and the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). At the same time, the rise of e-commerce enforcement, online marketplace monitoring and implementation of the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) have reshaped the enforcement landscape. This chapter provides an overview of the anti-counterfeiting framework in Greece, focusing on its legal basis, enforcement mechanisms and preventive strategies.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The key legislative instruments governing anti-counterfeiting enforcement in Greece include:

- the Trademark Law 4679/2020, which implements the EU Trademark Directive (2015/2436/EC) and the EU enforcement of the IPR Directive (2004/48/EC);
- Law 2417/1996 ratifying the Hague Agreement concerning the international deposit of industrial designs, Presidential Decree 259/1997 implementing the provisions of the Agreement and governing national design protection, and Presidential Decree 161/2002 transposing Directive 98/71/EC on the legal protection of designs;^[1]
- Law 1733/1987 on technology transfer, inventions and technological innovation, as amended, and Law 3966/2011, implementing the IPR Directive (2004/48/EC);
- the Unfair Competition Law 146/1914;
- the Criminal Code;
- the Code of Criminal Procedure;
- the Code of Civil Procedure;
- EU Regulation 608/2013 on customs enforcement of IP rights, as implemented by Regulation 1352/2013 and amended by Regulations 582/2018, 1209/2020 and 2024/2399;
- Law 4712/2020 (as amended by Law 4753/2020), amending Law 3377/2005, establishes the inter-agency market control unit and regulates the seizure and destruction of counterfeit and pirated goods;
- Law 5099/2024 implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on the DSA, establishing a digital single market and amending Directive 2000/31/EC; and
- the Anti-Piracy and Online Enforcement Rules (Law 5179/2025), amending articles 65A and 66E of the Greek Copyright Law (Law 2121/1993).

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Greece's geographic position, economic profile and role in international trade routes make it particularly vulnerable to counterfeiting, especially as a transit hub between Africa, Asia and Europe. Key entry points for counterfeit goods include the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki, as well as major land border crossings such as Kipoi, Promachonas and Kakavia. The tourism sector also contributes to seasonal increases in counterfeit sales, while flea markets and street vendors remain significant distribution channels.

Despite these challenges, Greece has strengthened its enforcement framework through enhanced inter-agency cooperation, operational coordination and EU support. Greece actively participates in anti-counterfeiting initiatives under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), including Operation Fake Star, Operation LUDUS and Operation SHIELD. It also uses the EUIPO's Anti-Counterfeiting Intelligence Support Tool and IP Enforcement Portal.

At the national level, the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI) regularly organises training seminars for enforcement authorities, often in cooperation with the EUIPO, to improve counterfeit detection and awareness of evolving market trends. Greece has also become more integrated into EU enforcement and intelligence-sharing mechanisms. In this context, Athens hosted the International IP Enforcement Summit 2025, organised with EUIPO support under the theme "Stronger IP Enforcement in the Digital Age", reflecting Greece's growing role in regional anti-counterfeiting coordination.

BORDER MEASURES

Border measures are a central component of Greece's anti-counterfeiting framework due to the country's strategic location along trade routes linking Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Major entry points, particularly the Port of Piraeus, make Greece an important hub for the inspection and seizure of counterfeit goods in transit or destined for the domestic market. Commonly intercepted products include clothing, footwear, accessories, electronics, perfumes and toys, mainly originating from China and Türkiye and transported through container shipments, postal and courier services and air cargo.

Greek border enforcement is governed by Regulation (EU) 608/2013, which establishes procedures for the detention and destruction of counterfeit goods.

CUSTOMS APPLICATION FOR ACTION

Rights holders may request Customs surveillance by filing an application for action (AFA) through the IP Enforcement Portal. AFAs may be national (valid only in Greece) or EU wide (covering multiple member states, including Greece). Applications generally include details of the protected IP rights, information on genuine products, guidance for identifying counterfeit goods and authorised contacts. Once approved, an AFA remains valid for one year and may be renewed annually.

DETECTION AND SUSPENSION OF SUSPECT GOODS

When goods suspected of infringing IP rights are detected:

- Customs authorities suspend the release or detain the goods;
- rights holders must confirm within 10 working days whether the detained goods are counterfeit – otherwise, the goods are released;
- importers or consignees are also notified of the detention and may either consent to or oppose the suspension of goods, or choose not to respond to the Customs notification; and
- if importers or consignees object to the suspension of goods, rights holders must promptly initiate legal proceedings to determine whether IP rights have been infringed and notify Customs accordingly to ensure that the goods remain detained until the conclusion of the litigation proceedings.

To support the detection process, Greek Customs officers use:

- risk-analysis systems to assess origin, type and consignment patterns;
- targeted inspections at high-volume points of entry, such as the port of Piraeus, West Attica Customs (previously Elefsina Customs), Thessaloniki and Athens International Airport; and
- X-ray scanning and physical checks, especially for containers originating from high-risk jurisdictions.

Greek Customs is known to be responsive and willing to cooperate with rights holders, which often provide training sessions or updated brand manuals to help inspectors identify suspicious goods.

SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE AND DESTRUCTION OF GOODS

If the rights holder confirms that the goods are counterfeit and the importer does not object to their destruction, Customs can proceed with the simplified destruction procedure under article 23 of Regulation 608/2013.

Key features include:

- No court proceedings are required if there is no objection from the importer within the specified period.
- Goods are destroyed at the expense of the rights holder.
- Storage costs are also borne by the right holder, particularly in cases of seizures carried out by the major Customs offices, such as those in Piraeus and Thessaloniki.

This procedure is efficient and widely used in Greece, enabling the rapid blocking of counterfeit goods.

SPECIAL CASES: IN TRANSIT GOODS

A common challenge in Greece, given its shipping prominence, involves goods in transit (ie, items entering Greek territory destined for non-EU countries). Regulation 608/2013 does not set out any provisions intended to render *Philips/Nokia* ineffective or mitigate its impact.^[2] Nevertheless, the Greek Trademark Law introduced a provision – already included in the EU Trademark Regulation (2017/1001) – that permits Customs authorities to intervene in cases involving goods in transit if they bear a trademark that is identical to, or cannot be distinguished in its essential elements from, an EU or Greek trademark, even when the goods are not destined for the EU market. This right is extinguished if the holder of the goods provides evidence demonstrating that the trademark owner would not be entitled to prohibit the use of the mark in the country of final destination. This legal mechanism allows Customs to seize counterfeit goods declared as in transit, shifting the burden of proof to their holder to establish non-infringement.

Nonetheless, the principles established in *Philips/Nokia* remain pertinent in areas beyond trademark law, and in some instances, they present significant hurdles to the seizure of counterfeit goods that clearly infringe copyright protections.

NOTABLE CASE OF BORDER ENFORCEMENT

Recent large-scale enforcement operations further illustrate Greece's strategic importance in EU customs enforcement. A notable example is Operation Calypso, coordinated by the European Public Prosecutor's Office in 2025. The investigation uncovered a criminal network involving fraudulent Chinese imports routed through Greece, including customs duty evasion, VAT fraud, counterfeit and undervalued goods, shell companies and falsified shipping documentation. The operation resulted in the seizure of more than 2,400 shipping containers at Piraeus, coordinated raids across 14 countries, arrests – including customs officers – and the freezing of luxury assets and bank accounts, with estimated losses exceeding €700 million. The case illustrates the increasing sophistication of counterfeit supply chains, Greece's strategic role in EU trade routes and the country's deeper integration into EU-wide enforcement operations.

MARKET ACTIONS

While border controls play a crucial role in intercepting counterfeit goods before they enter Greece, domestic market surveillance remains equally important in preventing the distribution and sale of counterfeit products within the country. Market enforcement actions focus on identifying, seizing and removing counterfeit goods that have either bypassed border controls or been produced domestically.

These actions are carried out by several enforcement authorities, often in cooperation with rights holders, and target a broad range of commercial environments, including retail shops, street markets, warehouses and logistics facilities.

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES

The principal authorities involved in market enforcement include:

- DIMEA– the leading authority for domestic anti-counterfeiting enforcement, responsible for inspections, seizures and administrative sanctions under Law 4712/2020.
- Hellenic Police (Economic Crime Division) – responsible for criminal investigations, raids and arrests, particularly in organised crime cases.
- The Financial and Economic Crime Unit – investigates large-scale financial and tax-related offences connected to IP infringement.
- Municipal police and regional authorities – active mainly in inspections of small retail outlets, open-air markets and street vendors; and
- The Hellenic Coast Guard and Customs authorities – involved primarily in port-related and border enforcement actions.

Joint inspections between enforcement authorities are common, particularly in tourist zones and commercial hubs associated with counterfeit trade.

SCOPE OF INSPECTIONS AND RAIDS

Market inspections commonly target:

- retail shops, street vendors and informal markets;
- tourist areas such as Plaka, Monastiraki and Omonia in Athens, Thessaloniki and islands including Corfu, Crete and Rhodes;
- storage facilities and logistics centres used for distribution;

- wholesale suppliers dealing in bulk counterfeit goods; and
- seasonal or pop-up businesses operating during periods of high consumer demand.

Inspections may be performed either ex officio by the authorities (systematic operations based on risk profiling) or following complaints, tip offs or intelligence provided by the right holders.

During an inspection, authorities typically seize goods suspected of being counterfeit, prepare a seizure report specifying the quantity of the items and the relevant infringed IP rights and promptly notify the rights holder – providing sample photographs of the seized goods to enable confirmation of their counterfeit nature.

Depending on the authority conducting the raid, as well as the urgency and specific circumstances of each operation, rights holders should promptly confirm whether the goods in question are counterfeit. Infringers may either acknowledge the counterfeit nature of the goods or raise objections.

DESTRUCTION OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS

Where seized goods are confirmed as counterfeit and no objection is raised, they are promptly destroyed under the supervision of the competent authorities. If the seizure is contested, the goods remain stored pending the outcome of the proceedings. Depending on the applicable procedure, storage and destruction costs may be borne either by the infringer or the rights holder.

Notably, in cases involving DIMEA where the infringer acknowledges the counterfeit nature of the goods, the counterfeit items are destroyed at no cost to the rights holder. In such instances, rights holders are neither notified of the seizure at the time it occurs nor required to confirm the counterfeit status of the goods. Monthly reports are issued, detailing the quantities seized per brand without disclosing the identities of the infringers. Further, specific information regarding each seizure – including the number of items seized and the corresponding seizure reference number – is uploaded to the rights holder's "suspicious case room" on the IP Enforcement Portal for informational purposes.

ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS

When counterfeit goods are identified during market surveillance operations, the responsible parties may be subject to both administrative penalties and criminal prosecution, depending on the scale of the infringement and the enforcement authority involved.

DIMEA primarily focuses on the seizure and destruction of counterfeit goods and is empowered to impose administrative fines of up to €100,000, depending on the quantity of items confiscated. Criminal proceedings are initiated ex officio only when DIMEA's operations are conducted in collaboration with another enforcement authority, such as the Hellenic Police. In contrast, the police and SDOE usually form criminal case files, which are referred to the public prosecution's office.

DIMEA has become the central anti-counterfeiting enforcement body in Greece, with enforcement activity increasing significantly in recent years. According to figures presented at the International IP Enforcement Summit in Athens, between January and June 2025:

- 11,437 inspections were conducted;
- 721 violations were identified;

- fines exceeding €2 million were imposed;
- 631 online shops were inspected; and
- 39 websites or webpages were taken down.

Enforcement activity continued to intensify in 2026. In March 2026 alone, DIMEA seized nearly 42,000 counterfeit goods, imposed fines exceeding €224,500 and initiated criminal proceedings in cooperation with cybercrime authorities. A separate operation in Crete resulted in the seizure and destruction of 18,713 counterfeit items and the imposition of fines exceeding €98,000. These operations primarily targeted counterfeit apparel, footwear, accessories, cosmetics and fast-fashion products, reflecting the Greek authorities' increasing commitment to domestic IP enforcement.

CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

Greek law provides for criminal sanctions in cases of intentional IP infringement, particularly in relation to trademarks and copyright.

Under article 45 of the Greek Trademark Law, intentional trademark infringement constitutes a criminal offence. Criminal proceedings are initiated following the filing of a criminal complaint by the rights holder. Penalties include imprisonment of at least six months and fines of no less than €6,000.

Commercial-scale or professional infringements are treated as aggravating circumstances. In cases involving the unlawful use of identical marks for identical or similar goods, particularly where substantial profits are sought or significant damage is threatened, penalties increase to a minimum of two years' imprisonment and fines ranging from €6,000 to €30,000. Harsher treatment also applies to repeat or professional offenders.

Copyright infringement is criminalised under article 66 of the Greek Copyright Law and prosecuted ex officio. The basic offence is punishable by a minimum of one year's imprisonment and a fine of at least €2,900. Where the infringement is committed for substantial financial gain or causes significant damage, penalties are increased to a minimum of two years' imprisonment and a fine of at least €6,000. In particularly serious cases involving professional or commercial-scale infringement, the law provides for imprisonment of up to 10 years and a fine of at least €15,000.

Further, published in January 2026, the Art Forgery and Cultural Heritage Act (Law 5271/2026) significantly strengthens the protection of artworks and cultural heritage. It criminalises the manufacture, sale and possession of counterfeit artworks when accompanied by intent to distribute. It also introduces enhanced enforcement measures, including the destruction of counterfeit items and increased penalties, with imprisonment of up to 10 years and fines of up to €300,000 in serious cases.

In addition to specialised IP offences, general criminal law provisions relating to fraud, forgery and the distribution of illicit goods may also apply, depending on the circumstances. Criminal provisions are likewise contained in Greek unfair competition legislation.

Design, patent and plant variety infringements are not generally criminalised under Greek law. However, article 17(7) of Law 1733/1987 criminalises false patent marking. Any person falsely indicating that a product is protected by a patent may face imprisonment of up to one year, a monetary penalty, or both.

CIVIL ENFORCEMENT

Greek IP legislation has fully implemented the EU Enforcement of IPR Directive (2004/48/EC). In cases of IP rights infringement, action may be pursued before the civil courts.

MAIN INFRINGEMENT ACTIONS

In the context of main infringement actions, the rights holder may request:

- permanent cessation of the infringing activities;
- refrainment from future infringing activity;
- destruction, confiscation or withdrawal of the infringing products;
- moral and material damages; and
- publication of the judgment in the press or online, at the infringer's expense.

Remedies under the first three of these points are also available against intermediaries. In many cases, courts may caution the losing party with a penalty for each breach of the judgment.

When calculating damages, the negative economic consequences suffered by the rights holder – including loss of profits and profits made by the infringer – are taken into account. Damages may also be calculated based on hypothetical royalties.

The rights holder may file a petition for injunction before the competent first-instance court. Injunctive measures are ordered, provided that the element of urgency is prevalent in the circumstances of a particular case.

When filing the petition for injunction, the rights holder may also apply for a temporary restraining order, which is granted in cases where the petitioner proves the existence of a prima facie serious infringement as a matter of exceptional urgency. Ex parte proceedings are possible in this context but rare in practice.

MEDIATION

Law 4640/2019 introduces a compulsory initial mediation session before the courts prior to the hearing of cases arising from patent, trademark and industrial design infringements. This session, along with proof of the lawyer's compliance with the obligation to inform the client in writing about the option of mediation, has become a prerequisite for the admissibility of a main infringement action under the new provisions.

ANTI-COUNTERFEITING ONLINE

The rapid expansion of e-commerce and social media driven commerce in Greece has significantly reshaped the counterfeit trade landscape. As traditional markets become increasingly regulated, infringers are progressively exploiting the anonymity and cross-border reach of digital platforms to distribute counterfeit goods. Addressing this online dimension has therefore become a priority for public authorities, rights holders and intermediaries.

Counterfeit goods are most commonly distributed through:

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online marketplaces such as AliExpress, Amazon, eBay and Skrutz.gr, where counterfeit products are often intermingled with legitimate listings and offered at unusually low prices;

- social media platforms, including Facebook Marketplace, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp, which facilitate covert peer-to-peer transactions;
- fraudulent online shops, which imitate legitimate brand owners or authorised retailers; and
- drop-shipping channels, enabling direct shipment from foreign suppliers with limited traceability and enforcement visibility.

In many cases, sellers operate anonymously, relying on disposable accounts, encrypted messaging services and offshore hosting infrastructure to evade detection.

Greece has progressively developed a strengthened enforcement framework to address online counterfeiting. Key institutional actors include:

- The cybercrime division of the Hellenic Police, which conducts digital investigations, supports domain takedown procedures and cooperates with prosecutors and rights holders;
- DIMEA, which monitors e-commerce platforms and social media and may request the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission to deactivate infringing websites – in 2023, the Administrative Court of Appeal upheld a DIMEA order for the removal of infringing content; and
- traditional enforcement bodies such as SDOE, which also handle online counterfeiting cases, typically based on complaints supported by digital evidence (including screenshots, test purchases and transaction data).

Greece has also implemented the DSA through Law 5099/2024, strengthening intermediary obligations and online consumer protection.

In parallel, rights holders benefit from a combination of statutory and administrative enforcement mechanisms. Under articles 11 and 13 of Presidential Decree 131/2003 (transposing the E-Commerce Directive), they may request the removal or blocking of infringing content. Article 66E of Law 2121/1993 further establishes an expedited notice-and-takedown mechanism through the Committee for the Notification of Copyright Infringement, enabling Internet service and hosting providers to swiftly remove infringing material. Article 64A additionally provides for injunctive relief against intermediaries whose services are used for infringing activities.

The new Anti-Piracy and Online Enforcement Rules (Law 5179/2025) expand the administrative sanction regime under article 65A of Law 2121/1993. Private individuals who access pirated content are subject to an administrative fine of €750, which is increased to €1,500 in cases of repeat infringement. Higher-tier sanctions apply to operators, platforms and intermediaries, including increased fines and the possibility of service restrictions. The law applies broadly to any person or entity involved in accessing, hosting or facilitating access to infringing content within Greece.

The same law also substantially amends article 66E, strengthening the out-of-court enforcement framework by clarifying the standing of rights holders and their legal

successors while reinforcing available enforcement mechanisms. These improvements include the introduction of dynamic website blocking, enhanced coordination among competent authorities and an expanded procedural mandate for the Internet Infringement Notification Committee, thereby improving its overall effectiveness in addressing online infringement.

EMERGING DIGITAL ENFORCEMENT TOOLS

Alongside legislative and enforcement developments, Greece is increasingly adopting technology-driven monitoring tools to combat online counterfeiting. A key development is the NEMESIS tool, announced at the International IP Enforcement Summit 2025. NEMESIS is an AI-assisted monitoring system designed to detect counterfeit activity across online shops and digital marketplaces. It is expected to support compliance assessments relating to e-commerce transparency obligations, identify suspicious or infringing listings and facilitate enforcement actions against illegal sellers. The tool also aims to enhance coordination with domain registrars and platform operators, reflecting a broader shift toward automated detection, platform accountability and data-driven enforcement.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND STRATEGIES

Beyond enforcement, a comprehensive anti-counterfeiting strategy includes preventive measures aimed at deterring counterfeit trade before it occurs.

Key preventive strategies include:

- IP rights registration and Customs procedures – rights holders should ensure that their IP rights are properly protected and regularly updated in Greece. In addition, they should submit applications for customs intervention and maintain valid customs decisions to enable timely and effective border enforcement.
- Training for enforcement authorities – some progress is being made in this area through the implementation of a training programme by the OBI in collaboration with the EUIPO. This initiative contributes to equipping customs and law enforcement officials with the necessary skills to identify and act against counterfeit goods.
- Supply-chain controls – implementing robust monitoring and auditing mechanisms for suppliers and distributors is critical to prevent unauthorised manufacturing and diversion within the supply chain.
- Market and online monitoring – rights holders should consistently monitor both physical marketplaces and digital platforms for unauthorised use of their IP, enabling early detection and response to infringement.
- Consumer education – awareness-raising efforts targeting consumers are also underway, notably through OBI's participation in the AUTHENTICITIES programme. These initiatives help highlight the risks associated with counterfeit products and the value of genuine goods.
- Adoption of anti-counterfeiting technologies – brand owners increasingly employ technologies such as holograms, QR codes, radio frequency identification tags and blockchain-based tracking systems to authenticate products and deter counterfeiters.

Although significant progress has been made in enforcement training and consumer awareness, further coordinated action remains necessary to strengthen the remaining pillars of a comprehensive anti-counterfeiting strategy.

ENDNOTES

^[1] At EU level, the applicable framework includes Regulation (EU) 2024/2822 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 6/2002 on Community designs and Directive (EU) 2024/2823 on the legal protection of designs and models. In light of the EU Design Reform, further amendments to Greek legislation are expected to ensure full harmonisation.

^[2] C-446 and 495/09.



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