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# MEDI-THEFT

## Newsletter N.2 November, 2022

### Partners:



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## MEDI-THEFT PROJECT NEWS AND UPDATES

Project MEDI-THEFT has seen some significant progress since its first inception.

Work Packages are following their foreseen development; in particular, the first deliverables from Work Package 2 are being finalized and submitted.

Developing project MEDI-THEFT also means involving key stakeholders and disseminating information about its potential outcomes, as well as informing them on the latest developments. An insight by project Partner IPSZ outlines the key steps to design the MEDI-THEFT platform.

Lastly, two very important events are taking place in Serbia and Montenegro. Project Partners ALIMs and CINMED are each organizing an event at a national level, where a session will be dedicated to Project MEDI-THEFT.

### WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER ISSUE:

- Insights on Work Package 2
- Latest updates on the project's platform development
- Project events and dissemination



### NEXT KEY OUTLINES:

OCTOBER 2022  
Paper on "The State of Medicine Theft in the EU" by Transcrime

OCTOBER 2022  
Paper on "Best Practices" by AIFA

OCTOBER 2022  
ALIMs National Event in Serbia

DECEMBER 2022  
CINMED National Event in Montenegro

SPRING 2023  
Platform beta version early 2023

## FOCUS ON: MEDI-THEFT PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT

*An insight on MEDI-THEFT's platform implementation by the Italian  
"Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato (IPZS)"*



IPZS's solutions have long been used in many sectors and realities with the aim of protecting the health of citizens, industrial property rights, certified product quality and fair competition.

IPZS is proud to put their expertise concerning the security and anti-counterfeiting field in a such a relevant EU project as **MEDI-THEFT – Data sharing and Investigative Platform against Organized Thefts of Medicines**. The overall purpose of the latter, indeed, is supporting LEAs and other authorities to enhance “theft monitoring” and promoting synergies among all stakeholders at a European level (and beyond) to counteract criminal activities against “property crime”, thus following the programs provided for by the European Agenda on Security.

As the IT Partner of the action, IPZS is leading the work package concerning the **design and development of the MEDI-THEFT intelligence-based platform** aiming to create an effective tool for collection, analysis and sharing of timely key information about medicines’ theft, robbery and loss, empowering advanced investigations to prevent and combat drug fraud.

In cooperation with the project coordinator AIFA – Italian Medicines Agency, the main functional requirements of the MEDI-THEFT have been defined. According to them, the platform will be able to:



- collect information on cases of theft / robbery / loss of medicines in the European countries and allow consultation of such data by authorized operators in a simple and immediate way (Reporting Module);



- generate reports according to specific inputs in order to support controls and audits by the competent authorities in order to prevent drugs stolen in some countries from being recycled in other ones (monitoring Module);

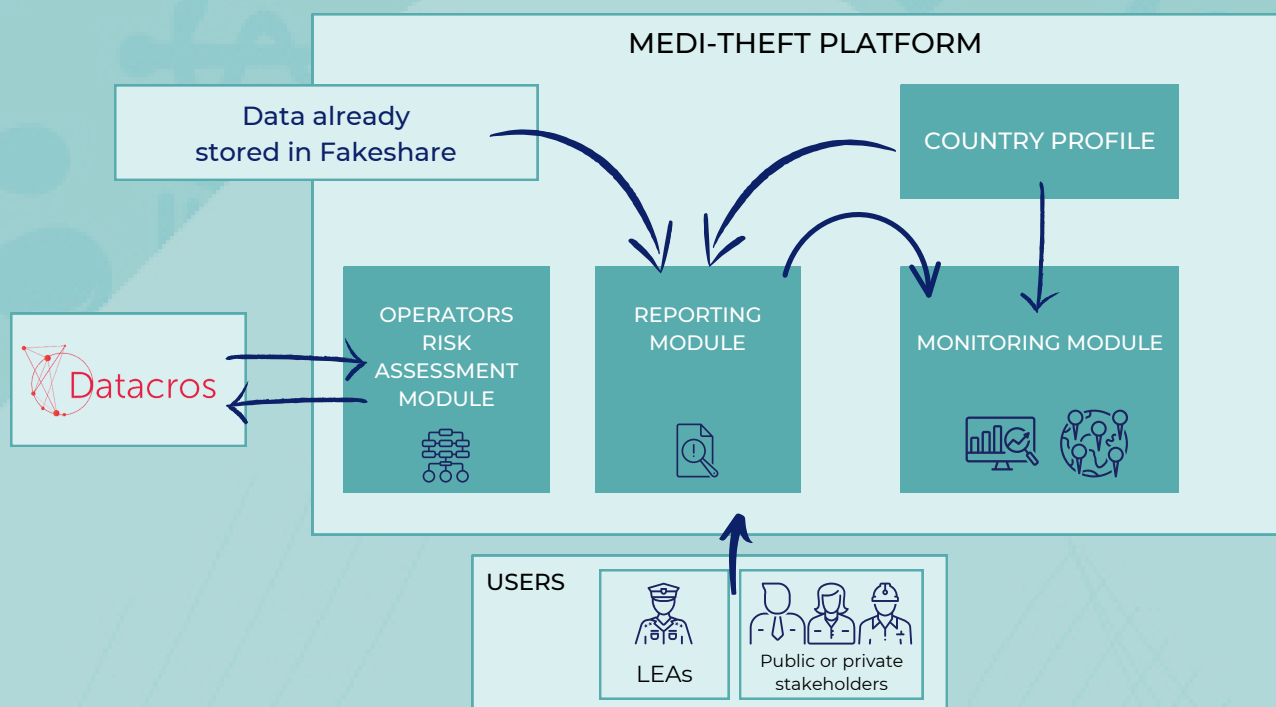


- support the identification of operators involved in suspicious or unauthorized activities and the modus operandi of criminal organizations by National and European police forces in order to define preventive measures. This functionality will be achieved thanks to the connection of the platform with the DATACROS System created by UCSC-Transcrime (Operators Risk Assessment Module);



- generate statistics and indicators for monitoring the main reference parameters at a "country" level (Country Profile).

Here below an overview of the platform and its structure:



Thanks to its such advanced functionalities, MEDI-THEFT will be a key technological tool to foster evidence-based actions against the property crime, improve cross-border cooperation and public-private synergies and support the creation of an EU standard in the response towards the pharmaceutical crime from EU LEAs .

Stay tuned for the next updates and the final release expected for the end of 2023!

## Analysis on the state of medicine theft

As Work Package 2 approaches its completion, we invited **Marco Dugato**, PhD., Senior Researcher at Università Cattolica - Transcrime to talk about the Work Package's results and future developments.

WP2 mainly deals with research; more specifically, risk assessment and definition of organised crime groups' modi operandi. The results of WP2 will form a knowledge base for the creation of an intelligence-based platform.

### Q: Why is it relevant to study the theft of medicines?

A: The theft of medicines has significant social and economic impacts. First, criminals usually steal medicines and medical devices to reintroduce them into the legal supply chain or to sell them on the black market. However, once stolen products are not subject to any quality standard in terms of distribution practices and can therefore damage the patients who use them. Second, this crime harms national healthcare systems and local economies because both public authorities and legitimate companies record losses due to both the thefts and the increased regulatory and enforcement expenses associated with them. Indeed, it must be noticed that a single case of theft of medicine can amount to several thousand or even millions euros. Despite this, the theft of medicines is still an underestimated and understudied issue, mainly due to the high level of unreported or misreported events. Therefore, it is crucial to increase existing knowledge and raise awareness about this crime. The WP2 of the MEDI-THEFT project responds to these needs.

### Q: What are the key findings of this WP?

A: In WP2 of project MEDI-THEFT we collected and analysed multiple pieces of information from various sources in order to delineate the current status of the theft of medicine in the EU and to identify recurring criminal schemes. On the first topic, the available information shows that thefts are widespread across EU and non-EU countries. However, the available quantitative data are often lacking and inconsistent across countries. On the second topic, we analysed a set of cases of theft of medicines or medical devices to identify recurrent criminal schemes based on common features, such as actors involved, target products, methods of stealing and reselling channels. As a result, we have identified seven different criminal schemes. Furthermore, we also assessed some specific characteristics of the legal pharmaceutical market in the EU MS and the corresponding regulation. The aim was to identify existing risk factors that can favour the likelihood of a country becoming the origin (where the thefts occur), transit (where stolen products are moved or where bogus companies are created), or destination (where stolen products are sold) point for this crime. The MEDI-THEFT report *"The Theft of Medicines in the EU"* presents these results in detail.



## Project Insight

Marco Dugato is a Senior Researcher at Transcrime. He is a founding partner and administrator of Crime&tech, spin-off company of Transcrime - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

**Q: What are the common elements of the identified criminal schemes?**

Beside the peculiarities of each modi operandi, these criminal schemes confirm that the theft of medicines is a complex crime. Beyond the mere stealing of products, this crime involves different illicit activities perpetrated by both specialized and unskilled actors. These activities are often coordinated by entrepreneurial and market-oriented criminal groups, usually leveraging on conniving professionals or companies acting as crime facilitators or brokers. Furthermore, criminals have shown to be able to rapidly evolve, taking advantage of opportunities in emerging scenarios, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and related countermeasures.

**Q: How does the MEDI-Theft Project contribute to counteracting this type of crime?**

As mentioned before, there is a need of improving the completeness and reliability of the data about thefts of medicines and increasing the sharing of this information among interested public and private stakeholders. More data means better monitoring of existing or new criminal trends to support the adoption of coordinated actions aimed at preventing or fighting this crime. Due to the transnational nature of this illicit activity, consistent and effective exchange of information between relevant public and private actors is crucial to support international cooperation and improve the level of control over the entire supply chain. In this vein, the MEDI-THEFT project will build a platform specifically designed to foster the systematic collection of data on this crime, providing a common tool for all EU stakeholders to share and collect information and therefore improving the amount and quality of available data. Moreover, this platform will also include and test a specific risk assessment module to support authorities in the identification of suspicious legitimate companies operating in both the pharmaceutical and logistic sectors. Finally, the results of the MEDI-THEFT project provide the opportunity to enhance awareness of public and private stakeholders about this issue and the best strategies to combat it. Providing the people "on the field" with more information, but also with guidelines and successful examples is crucial for obtaining impactful actions. In this regard, WP2 will produce a set of best practices drafted by AIFA to support national authorities and LEAs in the management of cases of theft of medicines.



Download the PDF version of the report:



"The theft of medicines in the EU" - by Transcrime

## PROJECT EVENTS

The MEDI-THEFT Consortium is organising its first two national-level events, where the project will be presented to relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector.

MEDI-THEFT presentation and sessions are led by Project Coordinator Dr. Domenico Di Giorgio at both events.



The Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices of Serbia - ALIMS has organized its annual traditional symposium, held in Kopaonik at Hotel Gorski, 21-22 October 2022. The symposium focuses on a great variety of topics, such as crisis communications, the fight against disinformation, discussions on valid regulations and guidelines in the regulatory procedures of drug licenses, and much more. The event was a great opportunity to share educational materials for all 500 participants, distributed through their registration package.

A dedicated session focused on MEDI-THEFT and was led by AIFA director Domenico Di Giorgio and ALIMS representative Pavle Zelić, and the project was highlighted in the opening statements and conclusions.

The CINMED event will take place from 1st until 3rd of December 2022, at Hotel Cue in Podgorica, Montenegro.

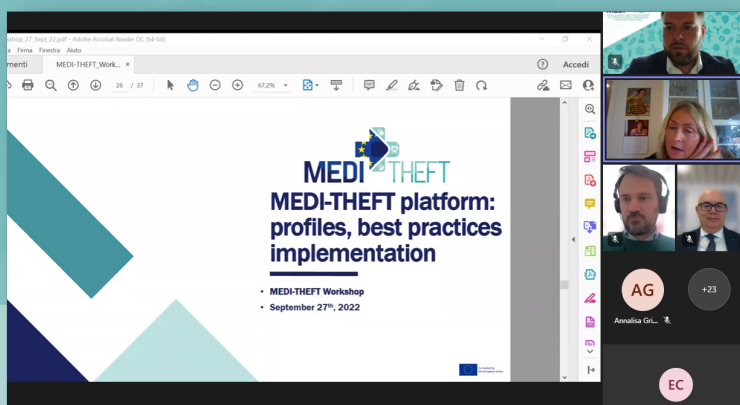
The event covers several topics, such as new competences of the Institute, current development in the field of medical devices legislation and also a training in the area of Good Distribution Practice Guidelines (GDP), Good Pharmacovigilance Practice Guidelines (GVP) and the protection system against falsified and substandard medicines. A dedicated session will focus on MEDI-THEFT and will be led by AIFA Head of Inspection & Certification Department Domenico Di Giorgio.



## PROJECT EVENTS

On the 27th of September MEDI-THEFT organised its first Online Validation Workshop, with the participation of more than 30 professionals, coming from both the public and private sector.

The workshop tackled issues such as the current status of the theft of medicines, risk assessment, the MEDI-THEFT platform and how MEDI-THEFT can help prevent medicine theft and protect the health of citizens in Europe and beyond.



Project events calendar:

Event Type	Location	Date
MEDI-THEFT dedicated session at Serbian national level	SERBIA	21-22 October, 2022
MEDI-THEFT dedicated session at Montenegrin national level	MONTENEGRO	1-3 December, 2022
Presentation of the Project at national level	ITALY	October, 2023
Platform training modules	ONLINE	Spring 2023





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*This newsletter was funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund – Police G.A. 101037959  
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