

*Responding to the Increasing Problem  
of Counterfeit Medications and Foods*

# **Committee Guide**

*Economic and Social Council*





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# 1. Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Tom Reckmann and I am happy to be one of your Chairs at the Economic and Social Council of OLMUN 2019. I am 18 years old and I just graduated from Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg. As I am interested in a couple of things, I have quite a lot of hobbies. I do ballroom dancing and I love to make music and sing, to name just a few of them.

This year's conference will be my fourth MUN experience. I participated at OLMUN twice as a technical staff. Already in my first year I was absolutely impressed by how just a few students can create an event like this - over 700 participants from all over the world, gathered together to discuss politics. And as I felt a desire to take on more responsibility, I decided to become a member of the Inner Circle and then wanted to chair a committee. Last year I was also chairing the ECOSOC, we had fruitful debates and a lot of fun there.

So, I am really looking forward to meeting you guys and having a good conference. Until then take care of yourselves and have a great time.

Dear Delegates,

As the second Chair of the Economic and Social Council of this year's OLMUN I am looking forward to successful and lively debates.

My name is Til Dieker and I am 18 years old. Like Tom I graduated this year and am excited to close my chapter of High School with this year's event. Besides being a part of Europe's best MUN, I enjoy spending time with my friends and doing all types of sports like basketball, tennis or skiing.

This being my first year as a Chair I am excited to gather new experiences and impressions. Meeting the delegates and participants from all over the globe is exciting every year.

I am really looking forward to meeting all of the ECOSOC Delegates and Staff and hope that we will spend a week full of fun and debates.

Until then enjoy your time and prepare well for the Policy Statements!

See you soon,  
Tom Reckmann and Til Dieker



## 2. Committee Introduction

The ECOSOC is one of the principal organs of the UN and was established in 1945. It serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues.

It features fifty-four voting member states, including 14 African states, 11 Asian states, 6 Eastern European states, 10 Latin American and Caribbean states and 13 states of Western Europe and other parts of the world.

Its specialized agencies work with a wide range of issues – for example, health issues (World Health Organization), food and agriculture or telecommunication. The Council is the place where such issues as economic, social and environmental challenges are discussed and debated. It also has functional commissions, for example, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Many various stakeholders involved with the Economic and Social Council are furthermore engaged in a productive dialogue on sustainable development through a programmatic cycle of meetings. An annual theme accompanies each of these cycles to ensure that discussions can be sustained and remain focused.

The ECOSOC holds one four-week session each year in July.

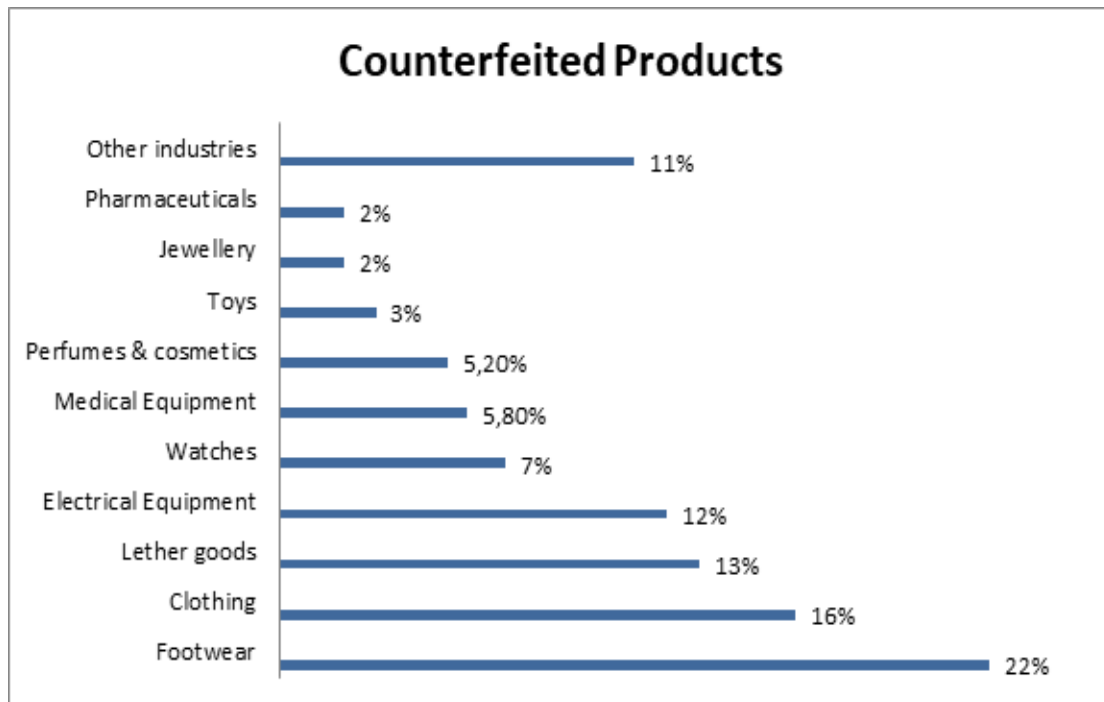
## 3. Content

### 3.1 Counterfeiting: General Information

Counterfeiting has become increasingly problematic in the last decade. Causing economical and social damage it has been recognized as a severe problem of future economics by the UN. In mostly every economic sector counterfeit products have appeared on the market worldwide. In 2018 it was the largest criminal enterprise in the world and the sales of counterfeit products pile up to \$1.7 trillion per year. It is expected to grow to \$2.8 trillion in the next few years. Also, a lot of jobs are on the line as it costs an estimated 2.5 million jobs worldwide in 2014. But there are not only economic problems. When it comes to fake medications or foods there are also more social and moral problems.

Therefore, the World Health Organization (**WHO**) has already started dealing with this issue.

Also, other international organizations such as the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development* (**OECD**) or the *International Chamber of Commerce* (**ICC**) have investigated and observed the global situation and dedicated themselves to stem the illicit trade.



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/trade-in-fake-goods-is-now-33-of-world-trade-and-rising.htm>

### 3.2 Counterfeited Medications – Definition

Even though pharmaceuticals are not the number one counterfeit product they may have the most negative consequences for consumers. But what exactly are counterfeited medications? The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) describe counterfeits as drugs that have been falsely labeled regarding their identity and/or origin to deliberately fool consumers.

Examples for counterfeited drugs are medications that:

- contain the correct active agent, however, either at a dosage that is too high or too low,
- have manipulated expiration dates,
- possess no active agents,
- contain an active agent other than the one specified, or
- are wrapped in forged packaging, blisters and/or contain falsified patient information.

### 3.3 Counterfeit Medications' Role on the International Market

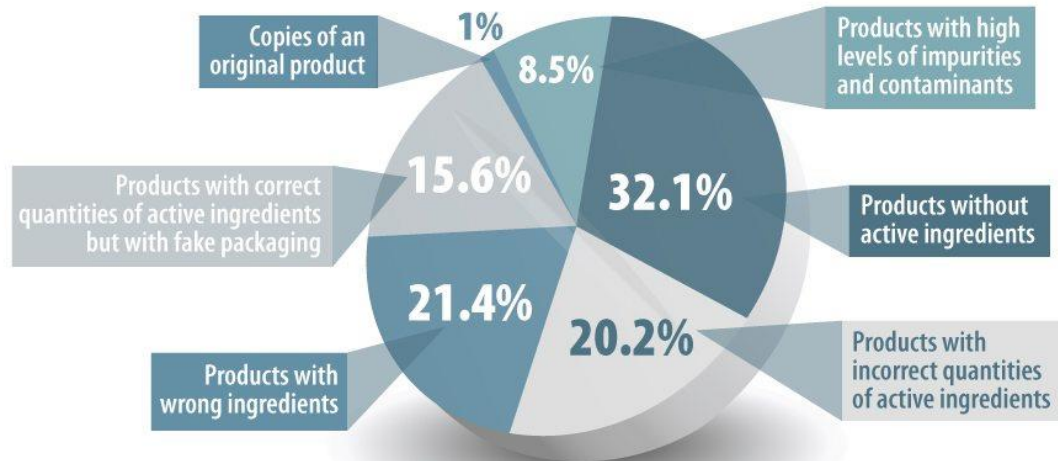
According to the FBI, the counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals accounts for an estimated \$600 billion in global trade, and may be the "crime of the 21st century." The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 30% of pharmaceuticals in developing countries are fake, stating that "Anyone, anywhere in the world, can come across medicines seemingly packaged in the right way but which do not contain the correct ingredients and, in the worst-case scenario, may be filled with highly toxic substances."

With increasing internet sales, the pursuit of fake medication has become more and more difficult. Through internet sales counterfeited pharmaceuticals can cross international borders more easily and can be sold directly to unsuspecting buyers. Yet, Interpol was able to take down websites in various countries, removed dozens of online ads promoting counterfeit products and arrested over 400 people in a 10-year investigation.

But still there are thousands of websites online, on which fake medications can be bought without prescription.

Most buyers of counterfeit medications especially in developing countries are attracted by low prices or the ability to obtain prescription drugs without prescription. A 2018 report by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shows that mostly 90% of online products are found to have a different origin than the website claims.

Reported counterfeits can be broken down into these six categories, as follows:



Source: <https://www.nursingschoolhub.com/effects-counterfeit-medication/>

### 3.4 Health Risks

Medicines are supposed to treat diseases and help counteracting symptoms. Counterfeited products do not imply to do so. Producers are not interested in a patient's health but in their money. Therefore, it is very important to understand the risks that come with these products. Even though fake medicines may contain an active ingredient similar to the original products, they might be of lower quality or of lesser effectivity. That leads to distorted test results or it can cause vaccinations' failure, in the worst case it can even lead to pathogens developing resistances against the original ingredient.

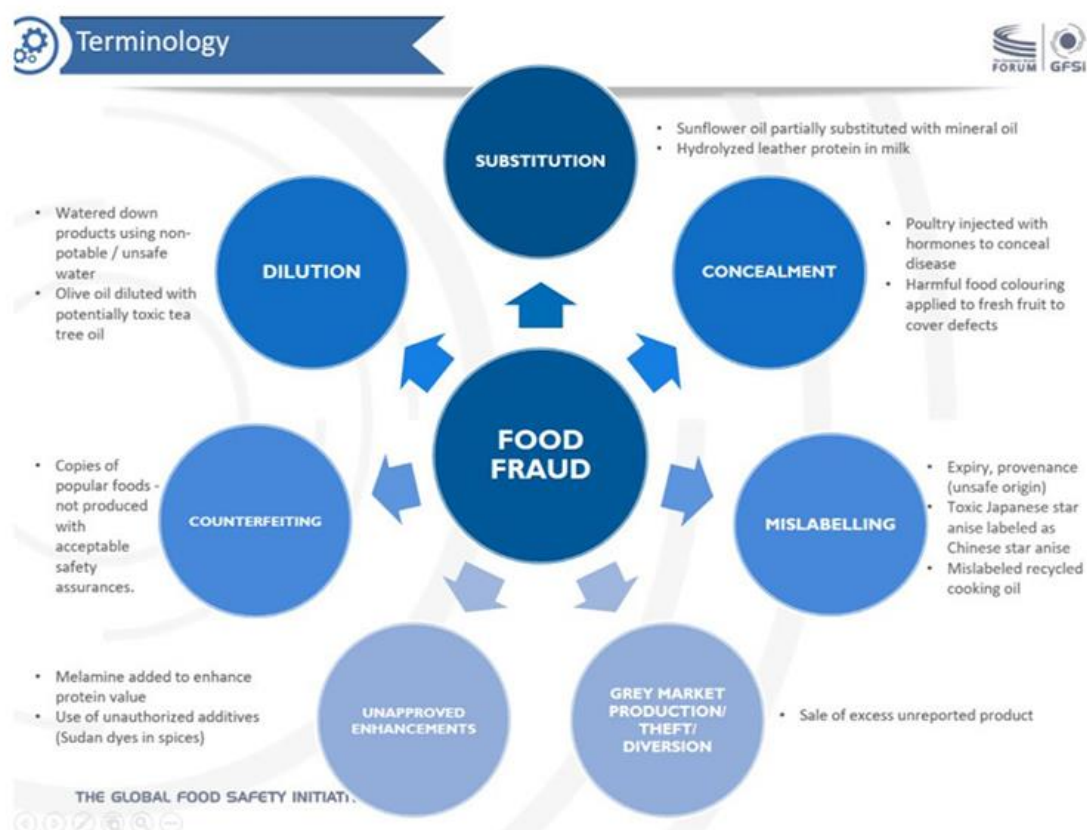
In some cases, counterfeited products are proven to contain toxic substances, which in some cases may treat an issue, but cause lots of dangerous side effects. In addition to that, often no prescription is required, which originally protects patients from overdosing or from critical side effects.

In long-term perspective it often leads to lesser epidemic and pandemic preparedness. That means that with a rising amount of counterfeit medications more and more pathogens are able to develop resistances against certain substances (e.g. antibiotics). So, if a worldwide pandemic breaks out, common medicines may not be helpful anymore and the pandemic becomes more dangerous than usually expected.

### 3.5 Food Fraud

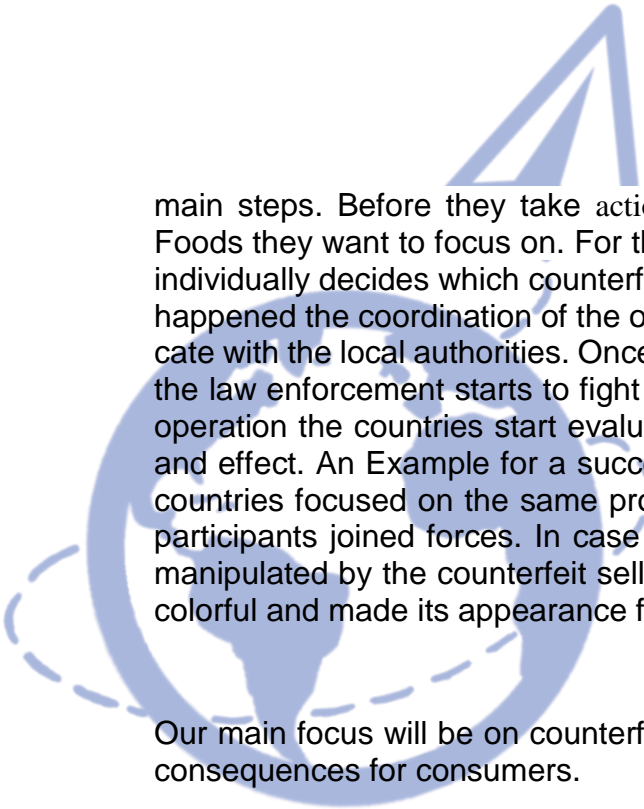
According to the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), food fraud is a collective term encompassing the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients or food packaging, labeling, product information or false or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that could impact consumers' health.

As shown in this diagram, food fraud can be categorized into seven main types of food fraud:



### 3.6 Countermeasures

Interpol and Europol have been leading an operation named OPSON (Greek for value of foods) since 2011. Their goal is to encounter Food Fraud through international collaboration. So far 61 Countries have taken part in at least one of the 7 Operations that are conducted yearly. The Operations consist of five



main steps. Before they take action, the participating countries decide what Foods they want to focus on. For that it is important to know that each country individually decides which counterfeited foods they want to go after. When that happened the coordination of the operation starts, and the countries communicate with the local authorities. Once everything is set up, execution begins, and the law enforcement starts to fight the selected Foods and products. After the operation the countries start evaluating their results in effectiveness, success and effect. An Example for a successful OPSON operation is OPSON VII. 10 countries focused on the same product, which was the first time that multiple participants joined forces. In case of OPSON VII it was Tuna that was being manipulated by the counterfeit sellers through liquids that made the fish more colorful and made its appearance fresh even though it was not.

Our main focus will be on counterfeit medicines as there are more dangerous consequences for consumers.

#### 4. What´s next?

This committee guide provides a basis for this years' topic that will be debated and discussed in the Economic and Social Council.

Nevertheless, it should not be the only foundation for a delegates' research on this topic and is not meant to be used as an all-inclusive analysis. Accordingly, this guide serves as a thought-provoking impulse to introduce every delegate to the topic. Indeed, the delegates will acquaint themselves with further information to be well prepared for the discussions and for the debates. This can be done by consulting scholarly materials, international news and more detailed proved background knowledge.

Find out how your country is currently progressing in counterfeiting matters. What goals has your country set? What barriers might your country be facing? Does your country have social or economical problems with counterfeiting? Does your country take measures already? All these questions and many more may be interesting for your research. In order to present your country's opinion best, be sure to prepare yourselves well!

#### 5. Organizational Matters

Every delegate is expected to write a **policy statement** and a **draft resolution**. Send us your draft resolution and policy statement by the **28th of May**. The P5 members will read out their policy statements in committee session prior to the lobbying as well as every other delegate, who is willing to present theirs.



Keep in mind that we will of course entertain punishments in certain cases (for all first timers - it is not as bad as it sounds).

As every year, we will have a dress code at OLMUN 2019. If you have never heard of the word “dress code” before, you should have a look at the OLMUN Handbook on our website [www.olmun.org](http://www.olmun.org). First timers should look through the handbook in any case. Also, there is a video, in which everything is explained in detail: <https://youtu.be/ZmjH43sJt68>

You should receive an email from us a month prior to the OLMUN the latest. If you don't, please contact us as soon as possible! Furthermore, we will establish a Facebook/ WhatsApp group soon for quick and easy communication.

If you have any kind of questions concerning the topic, OLMUN or what color your tie should have - don't hesitate to contact us! We are open to any kind of questions via our email address.

Our email address is: [ecosoc@olmun.org](mailto:ecosoc@olmun.org)

## 6. Sources and Further Reading

For your research here are few links to get more information on the topic.

Links:

<https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/88/4/10-020410/en/>

<https://www.bayer.com/en/background-information-on-counterfeit-drugs.aspx>

<http://www.oecd.org/>

<https://iccwbo.org/global-issues-trends/bascap-counterfeiting-piracy/>

<http://www.bifurcatedneedle.com/new-blog/2015/5/13/counterfeit-medicines-and-global-health-security>