

MALTA STAR

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Lab testing confirms counterfeit drug in Malta

European-wide investigations on counterfeit meds

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One of eight samples of pharmaceuticals sent by police for investigations in foreign laboratories was confirmed to be counterfeit, maltastar.com is informed.

The drug certified as counterfeit is Plavix 75mg and was imported in Malta as part of a large consignment on 7 December 2006. The medicine was not intended to be sold in Malta but was on its way to countries outside Europe.

The police probe in counterfeit medicine in Malta is part of a European-wide investigation into counterfeit drugs. The police were informed of the counterfeit drugs by the local Medicines Authority.

400 packets caught

The police had found around 400 packets of Plavix, and took samples of the whole consignment. In all, eight samples of medicine were sent to laboratories in the United Kingdom, United States and Germany for further investigations.

The police are expected to issue charges and arraign persons in connection with the counterfeited drugs in the next few days.

A spokesperson for the company that imported the drug had told **maltastar.com** that they realised that the packaging of the drug, Plavix 75mg, was not normal and placed it in quarantine right away. The company said it alerted the Medicines Authority immediately. The spokesperson also said that the company cooperated with the authorities and made available all necessary documentation for full traceability.

A police search was carried on 14 December 2006 and a magisterial inquiry, led by Magistrate Tonio Vella was launched.





Larger quantities in France, UK, Switzerland

The same drug was also distributed in larger quantities in other European countries across Europe – France, United Kingdom and Switzerland. The counterfeit packets are probably originating from the same sources – a large medicine distributor in the UK.

This alerted medicine authorities across Europe and Interpol launched an international investigation into the matter which is ongoing.

Plavix is used to prevent heart attacks and strokes in persons with heart disease, recent stroke or blood circulation disease.

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