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***News Release***

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**Cack-handed smuggler jailed after**

**secret stash drops into lap of investigators**

A clumsy smuggler attempting to flood the UK with illicit tobacco and alcohol – evading nearly £1 million in excise duty – dropped his stash in front of investigating officers from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Krzysztof Kochna, 45, from north-west London, was arrested as he helped unload cigarettes and alcohol into a storage unit in Tottenham, North London.

The haul was hidden in metal cages and a pallet full of cigarettes came crashing down from a forklift truck as it was being unloaded from an HGV, exposing its contents to watching HMRC investigators who then swooped to arrest him.

He was jailed on Friday (15 June, 2018) for three years and nine months.

Brett Wilkinson, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Kochna must have hoped the hidden tobacco and alcohol would go unnoticed, but our investigators caught him red-handed. He is now paying the price with a jail term.

“HMRC continues to tackle illicit tobacco and alcohol that harms honest businesses and takes money from public services. Anyone with information about tobacco and alcohol smuggling should call our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Kochna denied fraudulently evading tax on alcohol and cigarettes, and money laundering but was convicted at Wood Green Crown Court on 8 June, 2018. Fellow smuggler Wieslaw Ciosek, 47, also from north-west London, admitted fraudulently evading tax on alcohol and money laundering.

Kochna was sentenced to three years and nine months and Ciosek was given a two-year prison term, suspended for two years on 15 June 2018. He was also ordered to do 300 hours of unpaid work and be on home curfew between 9pm and 6am for six months.

Confiscation proceedings to recover assets from Kochna will now begin.

**Notes for Editors**

1. Krzysztof KOCHNA,DOB 25/10/1972, a builder, of Wood End Lane, Northolt, denied two charges of the fraudulent evasion of excise duty, contrary to section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, and money laundering £2,050 contrary to section 329(1) (c) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
2. Wieslaw CIOSEK, DOB 16/07/1970, self-employed, of Pennine Drive, Cricklewood, London, NW2, admitted the fraudulent evasion of excise duty, contrary to section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, and money laundering £10,335 contrary to section 329(1) (c) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
3. Photographs are available from HMRC’s Flickr channel [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)
4. Anyone with information about people suspected of smuggling, selling or storing illegal tobacco should contact our hotline on 0800 788 887 or report it online at: <https://www.gov.uk/report-tobacco-or-alcohol-tax-evasion>
5. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

**Issued by HM Revenue & Customs Press Office**

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