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 ***News Release***

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**Cigarettes caught in the wash land lorry driver in jail**

A lorry driver who smuggled five million cigarettes inside washing machines into the UK has been jailed for two years and eight months after an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Border Force officers stopped the vehicle at the Port of Dover on 27 September 2018. A search of the trailer revealed 5.3 million Mayfair cigarettes, worth almost £1.6 million in lost duty, concealed within 16 fake commercial washing machines.

They had no working parts but were made to look real, with fake control panels and energy efficiency certificates.

Lorry driver Mariusz Miroslaw Glinecki, 51, from Poland, was arrested, the cigarettes seized and the matter referred to HMRC to investigate.

Glinecki, a bus driver who began working as a lorry driver in January this year, said he picked up the fully loaded lorry at a petrol station in Slubice, Poland, and was due to make the delivery to an address in Newark, Nottinghamshire.

Tom Hunnisett, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Glinecki thought he could smuggle these cigarettes into the UK and do the dirty on all honest taxpayers – but we’ve cleaned up in the end. He is now behind bars, paying for his crime.

“This illegal trade has a harmful effect on legitimate businesses and deprives the country of funding for our vital public services. The duty evaded on these illicit cigarettes was equivalent to the starting salaries of 65 police officers in Kent for a year.

”HMRC works closely with Border Force and other partners to tackle and disrupt this illicit trade. I urge anyone who has information about the smuggling, selling or storing of illicit tobacco to report it to us online or contact our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Dave Smith, deputy director of Border Force South East and Europe, said: “My officers are always alert to the different ways smugglers may conceal illegal goods which in this case has led to a substantial seizure.

“Once items are seized, we work closely with law enforcement partners such as HMRC to bring criminals to justice.”

On sentencing, His Honour Judge Huseyin said: “The reality of duty evasion is a large amount of money due to go in to the public purse goes in to the hands of criminals.

“As such it is not a victimless crime, one has to think of the nurse’s salaries that £1.5m would pay. That is why courts take duty evasion so seriously.”

**Notes for Editors**

1. Mariusz Miroslaw Glinecki, of Miedzychod, Poland (DOB 14/07/1967), was sentenced to two years and 8 months in jail on 23 January 2019 at Maidstone Crown Court.
2. He pleaded guilty to fraudulent evasion of excise duty contrary to S170 (2) Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 at Maidstone Crown Court on 9 November 2018.
	1. The estimated duty evaded was £1,598,378 on 5,384,600 cigarettes.
3. Images of Glinecki and the cigarettes are available.
4. Anyone with information about people suspected of smuggling, selling or storing illegal tobacco should report it online at: <https://www.gov.uk/report-tobacco-or-alcohol-tax-evasion>
5. The starting salary for a police officer in Kent is £24,518 (this figure includes an annual £2,000 South East allowance). <https://www.kent.police.uk/jobs-recruiting-now/police-officer-new-recruits/>
6. Follow HMRC’s press office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice.

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

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