EU, US Cracking Down on Pirated Components

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BRUSSELS – In the wake of a recent successful discovery of a counterfeit component ring, EU and U.S. officials said today they would crack down on further counterfeiting.

China will be a focus of the operation, officials said.

The announcement stems from recent operations at major airports during which some 360,000 counterfeit parts, representing more than 40 brands, were uncovered. The seized parts were valued at more than \$1.3 billion.

"Traffickers and counterfeiters have become much more sophisticated.... They are no longer confining themselves to trafficking in some of the traditional goods we used to see them in, such as footwear or handbags," U.S. Customs and Border Protection assistant commissioner Dan Baldwin said, according to published reports.

" There are increasing numbers with high-tech goods, goods that impact our critical infrastructure, " he added.

The U.S. and EU said they would cooperate with importers to discover how fakes enter the market, and would initiate investigations, focusing on China, a large hub for counterfeit components.

Some of the fakes found, however, came from Taiwan and Hong Kong, most arriving by plane through couriers, according to John Pulford, a European Commission official.

The customs operation took place in German airports, France's Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle airport, London's Heathrow, and many hubs in the U.S.