

Annual Report 2025

Introduction

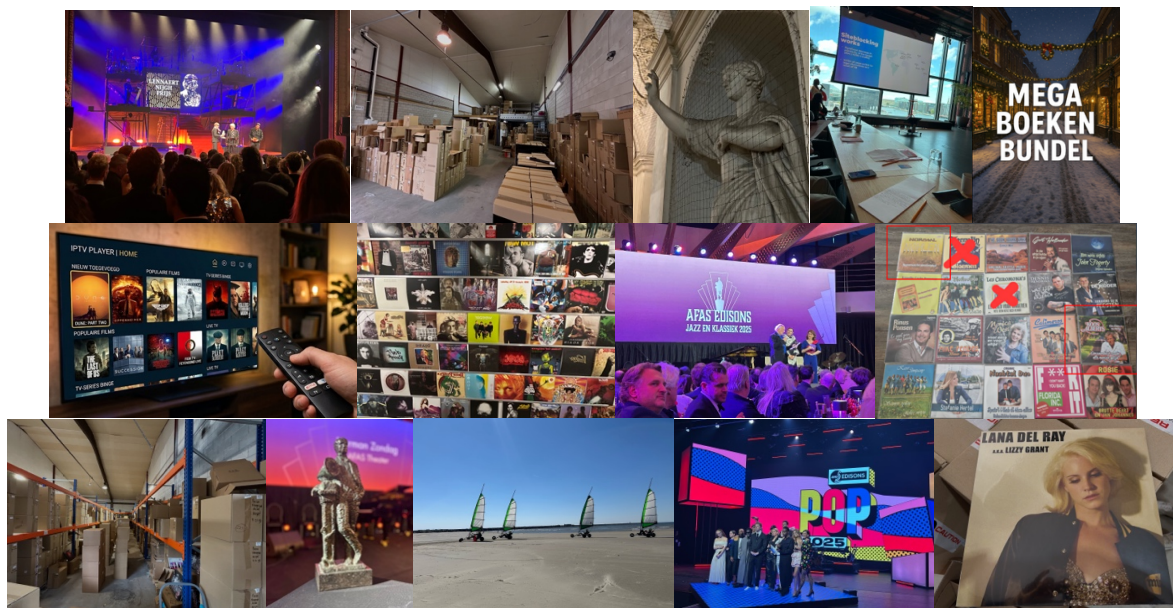
The BREIN Foundation provides collective protection of copyright and related rights for creators, performing artists and the creative media industry, including producers, publishers, broadcasters, distributors and platforms. Associated with BREIN are around thirty sector-specific and collective management organisations and their members, together representing thousands of companies and creators in the fields of music, films, series, books, written works, visual media and games.

With a track record spanning more than twenty-five years, over a hundred civil court judgments, thousands of websites taken offline and countless infringers held to account, BREIN plays a key role in the enforcement of anti-piracy measures in the Netherlands. This led in 2025 to BREIN being officially designated by the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) as a *Trusted Flag* under the *Digital Services Act* (DSA). In the last quarter, BREIN began sending *notices* to platforms in this capacity.

BREIN shut down a record number of IPTV sellers and websites. *Artificial Intelligence* (AI) has come to play an increasingly significant role within the organisation. BREIN conducted extensive research into infringing datasets used to train generative AI models and into unlawful AI models, and successfully completed its first AI investigations. BREIN assisted in one of the largest operations against illegal vinyl on Dutch soil ever.

BREIN obtained new blocking orders; on average, over 500 domain names were blocked in 2025 on the basis of civil court judgments against Dutch internet access providers (IAPs).

This report first provides an overview of the enforcement actions carried out in 2025, followed by a more in-depth discussion of certain topics that received particular attention during the past year.

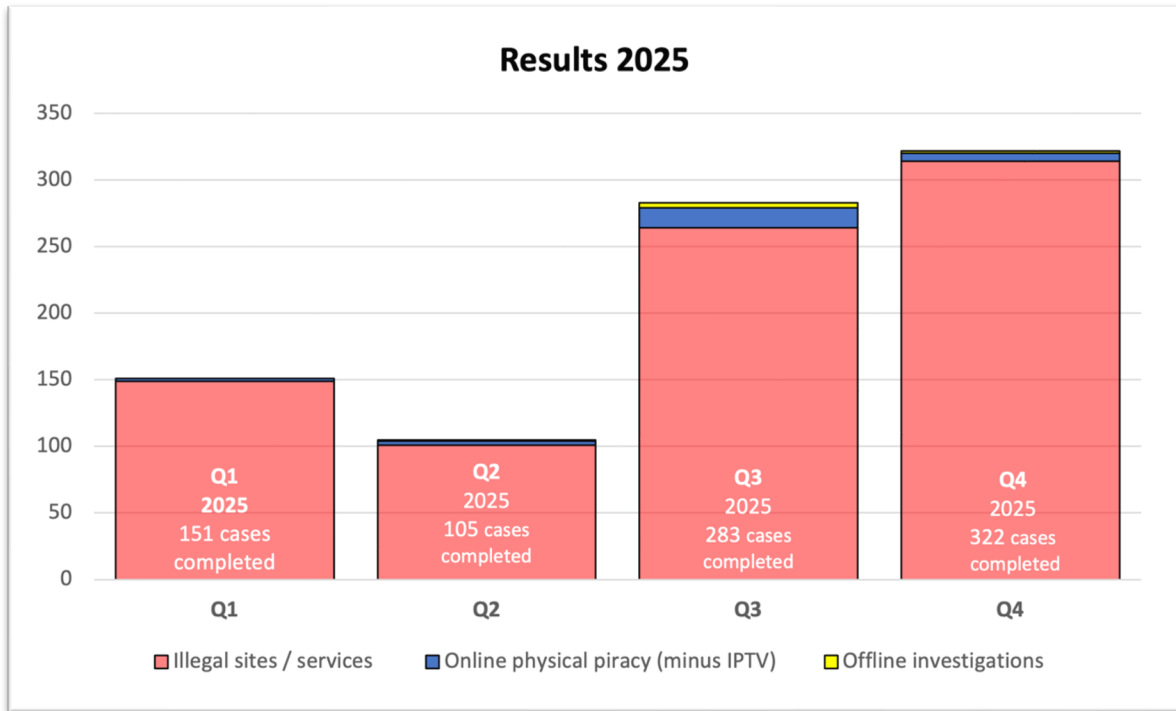


Numbers

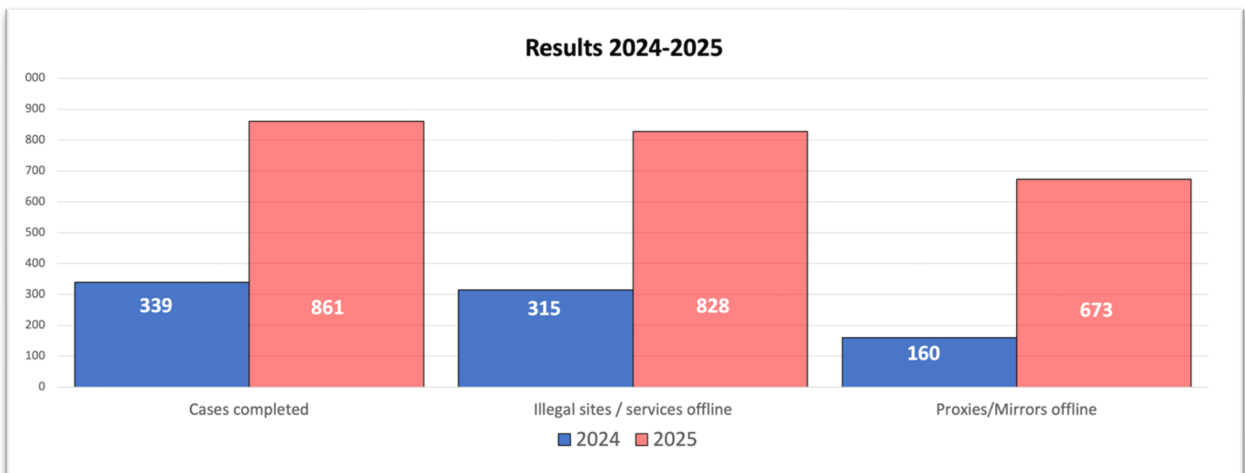
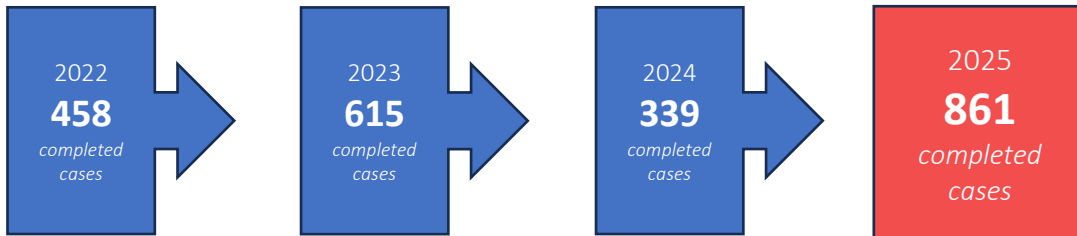
In 2025, BREIN carried out the enforcement actions listed below. Unless otherwise stated, these actions relate to music, video (films and series), books, written works, images and games.

The numbers below also include 'Trusted Flagger' reports from the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2025. BREIN has previously reported on these specific reports to the ACM, and this report can be found [here](#)ⁱ on the BREIN website.

- 861 cases completed ⁱⁱ
- 188 investigations completed ⁱⁱⁱ
- 828 illegal sites/services/platforms shut down
- 303 unique domains, 13 platforms, 8 IP addresses dynamically blocked^{iv}
- 402 illegal websites completely removed from search results by Google^v
- 673 proxies/mirrors shut down^{vi}
- 50 illegal IPTV/VOD subscription traders shut down
- 42 streaming sites taken offline
- 3 major uploaders, administrators and/or scripters investigated and stopped
- 189,212 Google search results removed ^{vii}
- 5,126 interventions resulting in the removal of online advertisements for illegal offerings
- 58 settlements, including 26 'knock & talks' ^{viii}
- 2 ex parte court orders obtained
- 26 online cases relating to physical media resolved
- 7 inspections carried out at record fairs^{ix}
- 29 .nl domain names suspended



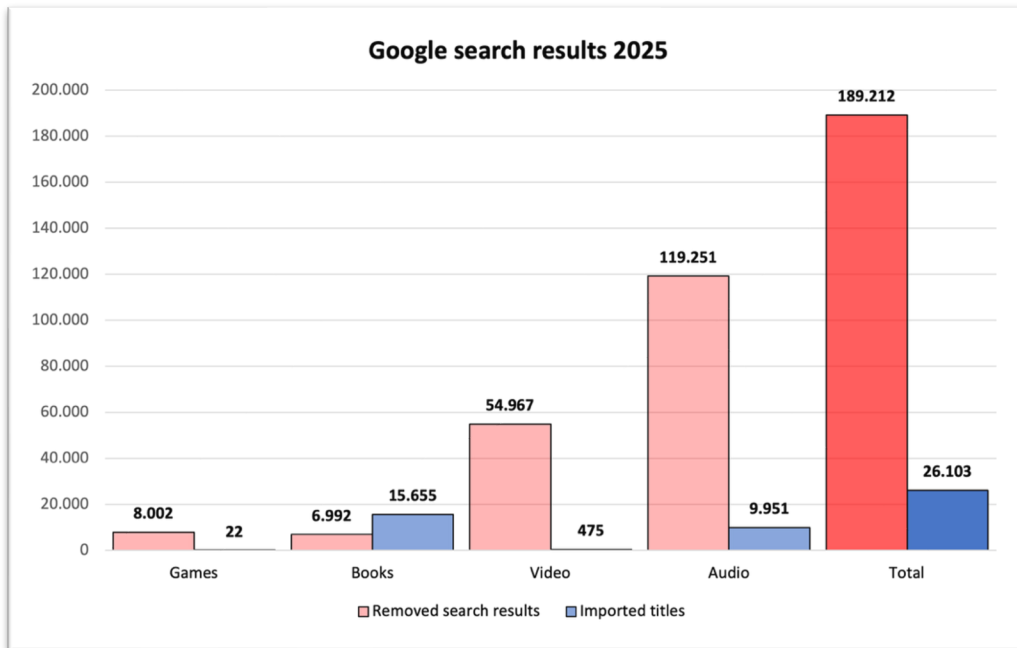
A comparison with recent years shows an increase in the number of completed cases:



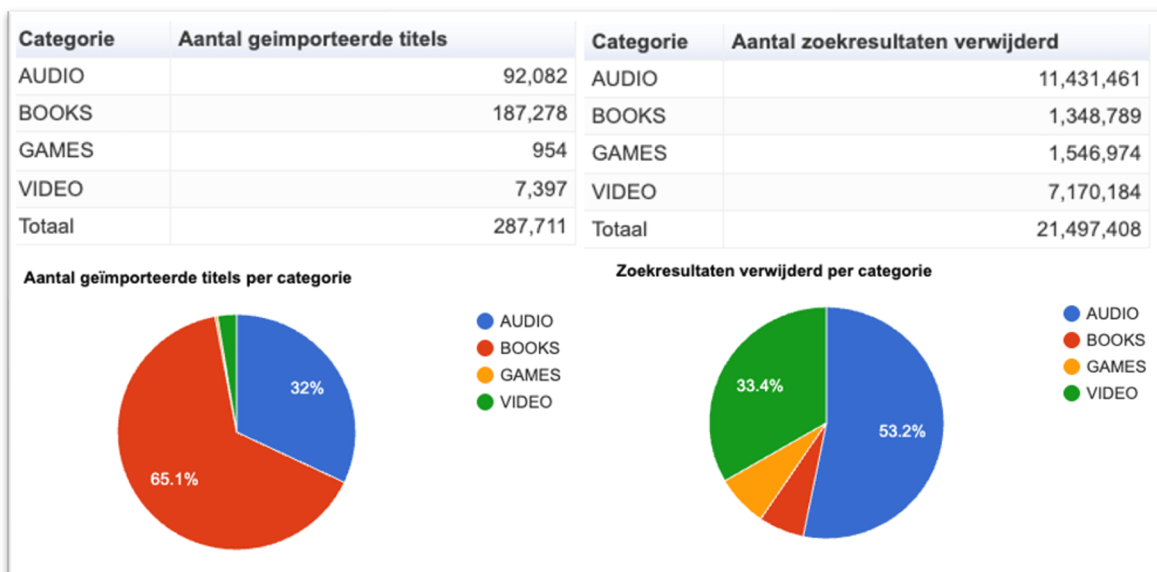
- *Google search results for illegal content removed (BREIN+)*

Over the past year, BREIN reported over 189,000 search results for illegal content to Google^x. The BREIN+ programme aims to remove Google search results for illegal sources, so that consumers' search queries lead to unauthorised content as little as possible. In addition to the removal of Google search results, reporting also means that websites from which many search results have been removed are pushed down the search rankings by Google. Research has shown that consumers pay significantly less attention to lower-ranking search results. Since the launch of the BREIN+ programme, BREIN has sent almost 21.5 million individual reports to Google at the request of rights holders.

Search results removed in 2025:



Total number of search results removed since the start of the programme:



Highlights^{xi}

Criminal law

BREIN has repeatedly urged the Public Prosecution Service (OM) to step up criminal enforcement. Such an approach is crucial for a successful strategy against piracy, particularly where organised crime and substantial criminal profits are involved. This is particularly the case with illegal IPTV services.

- ***Additional charges in major online piracy criminal case***

In a major Dutch criminal case against an international IPTV network with over a million subscribers, BREIN, has filed additional criminal complaints against various suspects involved in this case. BREIN is authorised to file criminal complaints in its own name and also coordinates the complaints filed by individual rights holders. The case is expected to go to trial.

- ***BREIN's criminal complaint against illegal video streaming and gaming platform***

BREIN filed a criminal complaint in support of an ongoing criminal investigation into a Dutch suspect. The man is suspected, amongst other criminal offences, of involvement in illegal video streaming and gaming platforms.

At the request of the Public Prosecution Service, the suspect was extradited from Dubai to the Netherlands. This arrest and extradition are the result of a major cybercrime investigation, in which the Dutch authorities worked closely with other countries.

- ***Record haul of illegal vinyl records***

In a joint operation with the FIOD, the Public Prosecution Service and foreign authorities, BREIN was involved in one of the largest criminal operations ever conducted in the Netherlands against a dealer in illegal vinyl. The operation, launched following an international request for legal assistance, led to the seizure of tens of thousands of counterfeit records. During searches of various warehouses, pallets full of counterfeit vinyl were found and confiscated.

Illegally produced records are sometimes almost indistinguishable from the originals, which entails significant risks. Consumers may unwittingly end up with inferior products, whilst artists and producers miss out on significant revenue. After all, the entire proceeds from these sales go to the infringers. Yet counterfeiters regularly make mistakes during production. A striking example of this is this case, in which the artist's name, *Lana Del Rey*, is misspelled on the cover:



- ***Various other reports***

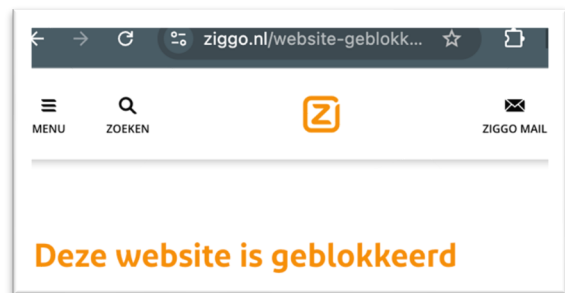
In addition to the criminal cases already mentioned, BREIN has filed various other criminal complaints against IPTV criminals. Further announcements regarding these cases will only be made once the investigative interests permit.

Civil proceedings

- *Blocking orders issued for thirteen clusters of illegal sites and hundreds of proxies and mirrors; further blocking measures in preparation*

At the start of 2025, Dutch internet service providers blocked 571 domains at BREIN’s request. In 2025, BREIN added a total of 402 new domains to the blocklist. Nevertheless, by the end of the year, the total number of blocked websites had fallen to 303. The reason for this is that a record number of 673 blocked websites threw in the towel and went offline. The permanent removal of blocked domains from the internet is one of the positive side effects of website blocking.

In accordance with the ‘Website Blocking Covenant’, the sixth round of blocking against Ziggo has taken place. In the ruling of 12 November, the judge in preliminary relief proceedings at the Rotterdam District Court upheld all of BREIN’s claims. The internet service provider has been ordered to block the popular illegal music sites “Newalbumreleases” and “Israibox”. These platforms offered more than half a million music albums without permission and attracted over a hundred thousand visits from the Netherlands every month.



As agreed in the covenant, the other Dutch internet service providers are voluntarily complying with this ruling. The court has thus once again confirmed that blocking measures are effective and efficient.



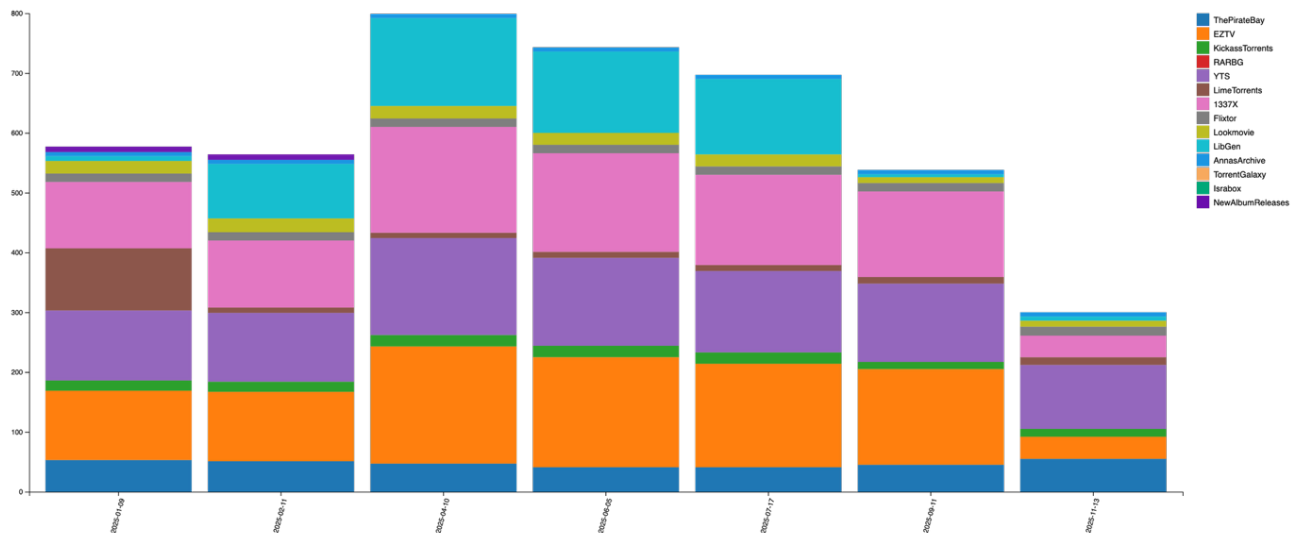
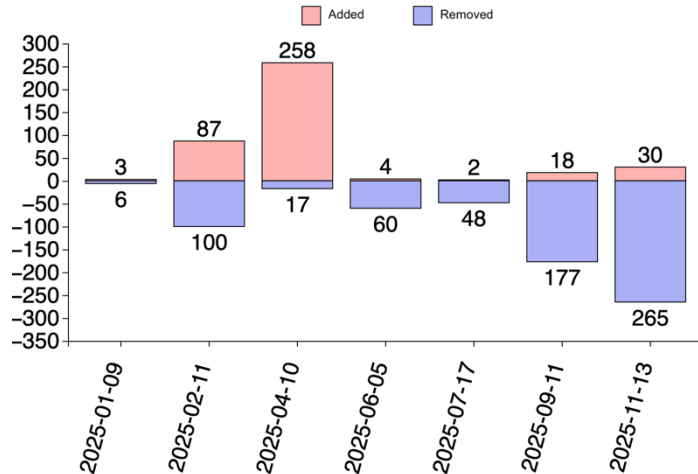
The seventh round of blocking took place against internet service provider Delta Fiber Networks. This blocking case concerned obtaining a blocking order against the illegal service NXBrew. This platform provides large-scale and systematic access to unauthorised copies of games. In addition to the game producers themselves, the producers of music, films and TV series are also indirectly affected by the distribution of these illegal games. Preparations for this case took place in 2025, with the hearing held in January 2026.



For the next round of blocking, a cluster of illegal sites with a common illegal source is being investigated. With over 6 million Dutch visits per month, this cluster currently appears to be the most widely used illegal source for films and TV series and is therefore the most appropriate to block, including future websites that use the same illegal source.



These graphs show how many domains were blocked by access providers over the past year across six updates, and how many domains were unblocked because they no longer linked to illegal content; usually because the domains went offline. The bottom graph shows the total number of blocked domains per blocking update.



- **Dutch actions against AI (related) services**

BREIN began the year in January by taking the Dutch generative AI language model (AI) GEITje-7B offline. This model had been trained on the largest Dutch-language training dataset, which BREIN had previously taken offline^{xiii}. This dataset consisted of illegal copies of tens of thousands of Dutch books, millions of lines from articles on news publishers’ websites, and countless film and series subtitles from illegal sources. Shortly afterwards, BREIN took a second Dutch model offline. This model, also based on Mistral-7B, had been trained on billions of tokens of Dutch-language literature, news and textbooks without permission having been granted.

In addition to the models themselves, BREIN focused on the sources of training material. For example, following a formal notice from BREIN, US-based Common Crawl made two million unauthorised Dutch-language newspaper articles inaccessible. The Common Crawl database consists of petabytes of copyright-protected works that have been ‘scraped’ since 2008. Common Crawl has confirmed that it has complied with BREIN’s request and stated that it will henceforth respect the restrictions in *robots.txt*. BREIN is calling on rights holders to come forward if they suspect that their material has been unlawfully copied by Common Crawl and made available.

In the United States, dozens of legal cases are already pending against providers of AI models. In Europe, too, various legal cases against AI providers are pending. BREIN welcomes these legal cases concerning fundamental AI related legal questions. It is crucial that the courts confirm that training generative AI on protected works without permission constitutes an infringement. As far as BREIN is concerned, training models using illegal sources, such as so-called *shadow libraries*, is therefore clearly unlawful. Gradually, the realisation is beginning to sink in that copyright must be respected, and we are seeing the first licensing agreements being drawn up.

- ***Evaluation of the Blocking Covenant between Rights Holders and IAPs***

The [Website Blocking Covenant](#), signed in November 2021 between Dutch IAPs, copyright holders and Stichting BREIN, establishes a joint procedure for collectively blocking websites offering illegal content following a specific court ruling. This agreement, which was reached under the guidance of the Ministries of Justice and Security and of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, ensures a more efficient approach to combating online piracy

In 2025, an evaluation of the agreement took place, which showed that the parties involved are satisfied with its overall functioning. However, BREIN has expressed a desire to implement a uniform landing page for blocked websites. This is intended to replace the current, often inaccurate texts and outdated case law on the pages of various IAPs.

BREIN is convinced that such a standardised page — as is already used in several EU Member States — offers greater clarity to internet users. The IAPs have indicated that they do not wish to cooperate on this. BREIN regards this as a missed opportunity for the provision of accurate and transparent information.

- ***Registry strategy: reports to SIDN***

The Dutch .nl top-level domain is popular. Both for legitimate purposes and amongst infringers. To register a .nl domain, the registrant must provide accurate details. Infringers prefer to operate anonymously. In the event of an infringement, BREIN can ask SIDN (Stichting Internet Domeinregistratie Nederland) to provide the detailed registration details, and BREIN can also ask to verify them. If the details prove to be incorrect and the registrant fails to provide the correct details, the domain will be taken offline. Last year, BREIN asked SIDN 29 times to provide the registration details associated with clearly illegal websites. This resulted in the provision of details of both Dutch and foreign registrants and the vast majority of these domains being taken offline.

- ***DSA – ACM – Trusted Flagger***

On 28 January 2025, the Senate passed the Dutch implementing legislation for the DSA. This designated the ACM as the competent supervisory authority. BREIN submitted an application for ‘Trusted Flagger’ status, whereby the organisation was thoroughly assessed on its expertise, independence and the diligence of its reports.

On 29 September 2025, the ACM granted this official status to BREIN. The final decision has been published on the ACM’s website, and BREIN has now been included in the European Commission’s European Register of Trusted Flaggers.



The granting of this status means that online platforms are now legally obliged to treat notices from BREIN as a priority and without delay. Initial results show that this status does indeed make BREIN’s online enforcement more efficient. Furthermore, this recognition serves as formal confirmation of the organisation’s expertise and reliability, which also benefits BREIN’s other activities. Various online intermediaries have since proactively approached BREIN with offers to use their specific Trusted Flagger portals.

In the fourth quarter of 2025, BREIN began submitting reports under the new status. To comply with the associated transparency obligations, internal systems have been adapted for annual reporting. At the end of February 2026, BREIN’s first mandatory Trusted Flagger transparency report was published, containing the figures for the fourth quarter of 2025.



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- **Action against illegal IPTV**

Both the offering and sale of illegal IPTV subscriptions and their use constitute an infringement.^{xiii} Research shows that a significant percentage of the Dutch population uses^{xiv} an illegal IPTV subscription. To combat this, BREIN enforces the law in various ways.

For example, in 2025, BREIN took action against 50 IPTV sellers. BREIN follows a strict procedure in this regard: identification is followed by a formal notice. In the absence of cooperation, BREIN immediately proceeds to draw up a writ of summons or an ex parte application. If the scale of the criminal activities warrants it, BREIN (also) files a criminal complaint. The ongoing criminal cases have already been described above.

BREIN takes down thousands of advertisements every year, including those for illegal IPTV. Research into advertisements on e-commerce and classified platforms such as Marktplaats.nl shows that traders frequently disguise their illegal offerings as media players with ‘extra options’. BREIN sees through this. The Breda District Court imposed a ban on a seller of illegal IPTV. BREIN is also active on TikTok and other social media; accounts advertising IPTV have been taken offline. A trader who used a combination of Marktplaats, TikTok and WhatsApp support was also taken to task by BREIN and permanently shut down.

In addition, BREIN has also successfully intervened with Groupon, for example. At the end of December, an international discount promotion for illegal IPTV was halted after BREIN reported advertisements targeting various geographical areas where Groupon operates. Groupon’s swift response underlines the importance of ‘Trusted Flagger’ status, which requires intermediaries to take priority action.

In addition to copyright infringement, BREIN regularly identifies IPTV-related crime in the form of scams. Consumers purchase an illegal IPTV subscription, with or without a set-top box, but then receive nothing. There is nowhere to seek redress because sellers operate anonymously. For example, an investigation into ‘Flex TV Box’, a party operating via TikTok, revealed that consumers received nothing after payment. Reports have been made to the police regarding fraud. The police subsequently added the website to the list of ‘Known fraudulent trading parties’. Avrotros Opgelicht has also issued an alert to warn consumers about this company.



- *Action against unauthorised vinyl*

The trade in unauthorised vinyl remained a problem in 2025. Thanks to successful cooperation with the organisers of Dutch record fairs and active checks by BREIN, the supply of *counterfeits* (exact copies of original releases) at Dutch record fairs has fallen dramatically. During inspections in 2025, illegal records were seized from only a few stalls. The traders signed a cease and desist declaration with a penalty clause.

The Dutch approach serves as a blueprint for other countries. BREIN shares information on illegal works in an international database and presents this methodology at conferences to sister organisations. BREIN does not only inspect large fairs; spot checks are also carried out at smaller markets to prevent the illegal trade from relocating. Dutch record fairs retain their international status as major trading hubs partly due to the effective prevention of piracy.

Unauthorised vinyl is also mainly offered on classified platforms. BREIN identifies sellers and orders them to cease and desist from the unauthorised sale, demands a cease and desist declaration and claims the costs incurred. Disclosure of information regarding the source of the vinyl records is always part of the settlement. This ranges from professional online shops and dealers in digital storage devices with music to sellers on Marktplaats. Investigations revealed that these self-styled ‘hobbyists’ and ‘collectors’ were conducting such a professional trade that a cease-and-desist declaration with a contractual penalty for future infringements was necessary.



Some of the traders targeted had hundreds of advertisements online and ignored previous warnings. For example, one trader offered nearly 2,000 singles and sold previously unreleased work by artists such as Normaal and Koos Alberts. In virtually all cases, the offenders have signed a cease-and-desist declaration. This includes a substantial penalty clause to prevent future infringements. In the event of a repeat offence, a standard contractual penalty of €500 applies per infringing product or per day that the infringement continues. In addition, they were often required to pay investigation costs and provide information about their sourcing channels.

Since the introduction of the DSA and the increased obligations on platforms to combat infringements, BREIN has observed a decline in illegal content on the well-known major platforms and a shift of such content to alternative platforms. BREIN is keeping pace with these changes and, over the past year, has begun enforcing the law on various new platforms through daily checks. Several platforms use input from BREIN to set up preventive filters to combat infringements.



(Examples of seized illegal records)

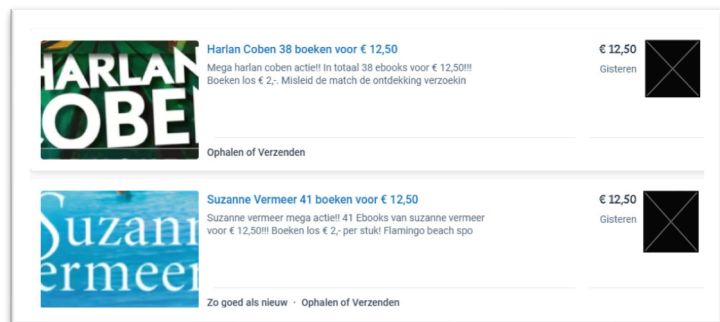
In mid-2025, BREIN discovered illegal live radio broadcasts on vinyl at a well-known retailer. The retailer removed the records immediately following a formal notice and pointed the finger at the supplier. The producer and supplier contested the allegations. Among other things, their lawyer challenged the validity of BREIN’s powers of attorney and the enforceability of the rights of American artists. Faced with the threat of legal action, the parties conceded. They signed an agreement to cease production and trade, to no longer sell any work by the artist in question without explicit permission, and to pay a sum of money. The

retailer also settled with BREIN. BREIN was able to achieve this success thanks to specific powers of attorney. BREIN is committed to even closer cooperation with record companies to obtain more powers of attorney against this type of cheap ‘grey bootleg’, which are offered in relatively large numbers and are a thorn in the side of labels, artists and enthusiasts.

- **Action against the offering of unauthorised e-books and other written works**

In addition to the previously described blocking of *shadow libraries* LibGen and Annas Archive and enforcement against AI datasets, BREIN also takes action in other ways against the offering of unauthorised copied e-books. Illegal copies of e-books are often traded via classified platforms. BREIN monitors these services daily and removes infringing content. Sellers of illegal content often create a limited number of advertisements featuring specific popular book titles. Once contact is made with these sellers, it often transpires that they possess libraries containing thousands of illegally copied ebooks. BREIN identifies these large-scale and persistent infringers, who are then required to issue a cease-and-desist declaration with a penalty clause and pay the legal costs.

Due to the penalty clause, typically set at €500 per infringing book offered, there is relatively little recidivism. Nevertheless, BREIN caught a repeat offender trading in illegal copies of ebooks on both classified sites and in Facebook groups, despite a previous court order issued several years ago. BREIN once again compiled a dossier of evidence and engaged a bailiff to serve the forfeited contractual penalties. There was no response. BREIN’s in-house lawyer therefore initiated summary proceedings before the court. The hearing took place on 8 October, and in November the Haarlem District Court issued a default judgment in which BREIN’s claims were upheld. Following an investigation into the seller’s assets, the bailiff seized the seller’s home and car.



BREIN also takes action on social media against the illegal distribution of ebooks. A member publisher alerted BREIN to TikTok posts in which a particular, clearly infringing website was promoted as a source for ebooks. BREIN contacted the influencers in question, who immediately took the posts down. Anyone can report such infringing posts or posts that facilitate infringement to BREIN via the website.

- **Other**

BREIN had a Twitch livestream taken down where all famous Dutch Bassie and Adriaan content was being streamed live. After receiving a cease-and-desist notice and further information from BREIN, Twitch decided to make the livestream inaccessible. The Bassie and Adriaan case is an example where rights holders invested in optimising older content to make the footage suitable for release on VOD platforms. BREIN also combats piracy of this type of content.

BREIN also successfully took an illegal web radio station off the air. This online station operated as a modern variant of the classic pirate radio station, but on the internet. The station broadcast a wide range of music by Dutch artists on a daily basis, but categorically refused to obtain the necessary licences.

BREIN also assists in third-party legal proceedings where this is in the interests of BREIN’s members. Several consumers, mainly elderly people, had engaged a one-man IT business to resolve their computer problems.

In addition to help with computer issues, IPTV also formed part of his service package. Over time, the man held his clients' logins for important accounts hostage, forced them to sign up for expensive service contracts and refused to accept cancellations. Clients who objected to his practices were threatened. The man had victimised so many people that his practices were widely reported on consumer programmes on TV and in the newspapers. BREIN provided expertise in the legal proceedings between the customers and the IT service provider and submitted a statement regarding the infringing nature of illegal IPTV for the purposes of the case. BREIN also investigated a similar subscription found in the possession of one of the victims. The victims and the man encountered each other outside the courtroom after the hearing, which resulted in a scuffle. The court ruled in favour of the victim.

Sellers of pirated content conceal their true identity as much as possible. However, based on established case law, BREIN has the right to request the disclosure of the name and address details (NAW) of infringers from intermediaries, including payment providers. Last year, too, BREIN exercised this right to request NAW disclosure on numerous occasions. This included a case against a Dutch payment provider, which subsequently handed over the NAW of an anonymous website operator of an illegal IPTV service to BREIN.

BREIN also served a summons on a folk singer whose popularity was so limited that he ran a *side* business selling hard drives containing 70,000 music tracks by other artists. He operated anonymously and his true identity was only uncovered after an intensive search. It was only at that point that his surprising double life became clear. He signed a cease and desist declaration with a substantial penalty clause.

BREIN also tracked down a seller who was offering so-called "track packs" (a collection of audio tracks) for sale via his website. The track packs contained around 300 audio files comprising approximately 19 hours of (remixes of) existing songs by artists such as Flemming, Guus Meeuwis, Anouk and international artists. The infringer signed a cease-and-desist declaration and paid the enforcement costs.



- **Pre-release**

BREIN regularly investigates pre-release leaks at the request of artists and record companies. It is, unfortunately, a fact that artists regularly have to deal with pre-release leaks. Some infringers go to great lengths to obtain such material. Identity fraud and phishing are no exception. It goes without saying, but BREIN strongly advises artists and music companies to secure their unreleased material as effectively as possible.

At the request of the record label, BREIN assisted in identifying the account holder associated with the X account on which the Dutch entry for the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest was shared prior to the release date.

A well-known Dutch film director and screenwriter alerted BREIN to an anonymous X account that was illegally sharing films via online streams. BREIN issued a formal notice to X, following which initially only the reported titles were removed. A second formal notice resulted in X taking *all* streams from BREIN members offline, much to the frustration of the anonymous administrator.

BREIN was approached by the record label of a well-known Dutch band because an unreleased recording by these artists had been unlawfully remixed and uploaded to various music streaming services. The original track had not yet been released at the time of these uploads. BREIN identified the source and had the uploads taken offline from services such as Spotify, Boomplay, SoundCloud and Apple Music.

BREIN investigated a Dutch-language pre-release group, which systematically offered (pre-release) musical works by Dutch-language artists. Among other things, a .nl domain was used for this purpose. At BREIN's request, SIDN carried out a check on the registration details. These proved to be incorrect, after which the domain was made inaccessible. In collaboration with IFPI and the record companies, an investigation is underway into the origin of these works and who is behind this group.

BREIN removed Google search results, checked hundreds of illegal links and sent out a large number of notice and takedown requests in connection with the pre-releases of two films. This concerned both a film that appeared on illegal services prior to its international release date and a film that became available online before its Dutch release date. At the request of the distributors, BREIN has done everything within its power to trace the sources and limit the illegal distribution, thereby helping to ensure the success of the official release.

Although not strictly a pre-release, the removal of a film from YouTube at the director's request was nonetheless relevant to a successful release on the Dutch market. The film had only been released on a VOD platform a few days earlier and was also found to be offered for free without authorisation. In practice, unauthorised new releases are also uploaded to legal platforms such as YouTube. Do not hesitate to report this to BREIN if you need assistance in taking your copyright-protected works offline.

Outreach

Over the past year, BREIN has invested heavily in sharing knowledge with external parties. In today's digital world, enforcement organisations are seeking efficient enforcement options, making knowledge exchange more important than ever.

At the start of the year, BREIN took part in a focus group on the WAMCA, organised by the universities of Rotterdam, Nijmegen and Utrecht as part of the evaluation and comparative legal research into the WAMCA. BREIN was subsequently also present, at the invitation of the Ministry of Justice and Security, at the evaluation meeting on the WAMCA organised in response to the reports published by the researchers. The WAMCA is the collective action regime on which BREIN bases all its claims and legal proceedings (Section 3:305a of the Dutch Civil Code). Since 2020, the collective action regime has been expanded to include a provision enabling claims for damages. However, this expansion has tightened the requirements for actions in the public interest, such as those pursued by BREIN. Last year, due to dissatisfaction with the increase in legal proceedings against the State, there was a call from part of the House of Representatives to tighten the requirements even further.

BREIN visited and hosted various online intermediaries to discuss cooperation and how infringements can be combated even more effectively in the future.

BREIN met with the new Dutch Streaming Services Trade Association. BREIN gave a presentation on enforcement in general and against illegal IPTV in particular. During this meeting, the foundations were laid for future cooperation. The issue of piracy is a major concern among the association's members, particularly due to competition from illegal IPTV. During the year, BREIN also held extensive discussions with various individual streamers, including sports streamers. The overlap between the offerings of sports streamers and the content of the AV sector and VOD platforms on illegal services is evident, and cooperation is therefore an obvious step.

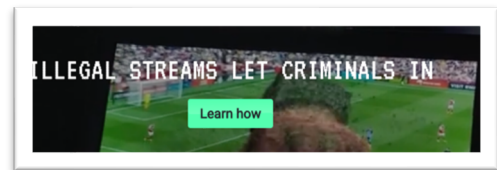


On the initiative of a major Dutch broadcaster, a broad group of stakeholders has been formed, comprising not only rights holders and distributors but also internet intermediaries, to discuss measures against illegal IPTV. BREIN is part of this group.

BREIN's research team was asked by various enforcement organisations and authorities to give a presentation on our open-source intelligence (OSINT) activities. All these parties encounter similar problems with online enforcement. BREIN gave presentations in this context. Keeping each other informed about the latest OSINT tips and tricks is of mutual benefit.

BREIN also met and established links with various civil law enforcement organisations at home and abroad, and discussed at length its experiences in online enforcement, whether or not as a trusted flagger. We often see that the same illegal sources target different countries, and the same internet intermediaries are regularly found to be involved in illegal activities, whether it concerns copyright infringement or other criminal or unlawful content.

BREIN contacted the initiators of the [BeStreamwise.com](https://www.be-streamwise.com) media campaign to discuss how they set up this campaign and what the results have been. The campaign aims to inform people about the dangers of illegal streaming.



BREIN was approached by the DNS4EU project and asked if it would be willing to support the initiative. DNS4EU is funded by the European Commission and aims to provide an alternative to the public DNS resolvers that currently dominate the market. The main objectives are to improve protection against cyber security threats and to provide “a privacy-compliant and resilient DNS service to strengthen the digital sovereignty and security of EU citizens, governments and critical infrastructure”. BREIN sees several advantages, particularly the ability to block illegal sites more effectively. BREIN therefore shares the details of websites blocked in the Netherlands and sends DNS4EU up-to-date lists of blocked websites.



BREIN spoke with the Belgian BAPO Service, part of the Belgian Federal Public Service Economy (FPS). This service is responsible for combating online infringements of copyright and related rights, as well as illegal gambling. One of the Service's missions is to encourage agreements between rights holders and intermediaries providing information services. In light of this, they analyse European voluntary agreements and codes relating to website blocking, including the covenant that rights holders and BREIN concluded with Dutch internet service providers.

Other news

- ***Implementation of NIS2***

The NIS2 Directive is being implemented in the Netherlands through the Cyber Security Act. Previously, there was an opportunity to submit a contribution to the consultation organised by the Ministry of Justice and Security. The draft bill, including the Explanatory Memorandum amended following the contributions received during the consultation, was sent to the Council of State in December 2024 for advice. BREIN has limited its contribution to the provisions setting out obligations for domain registration services regarding the database containing domain registration data and access thereto (Article 28 of the Directive, Articles 49 and 50 of the Cybersecurity Act). As BREIN advocated in its contribution, the Memorandum states that it must be possible to provide the details of the ultimate holder of a domain (even if a so-called privacy or proxy service is involved), and it has also been clarified that any natural or legal person with a legal basis may request data and that this is not limited to government bodies.



- **WIPO report**

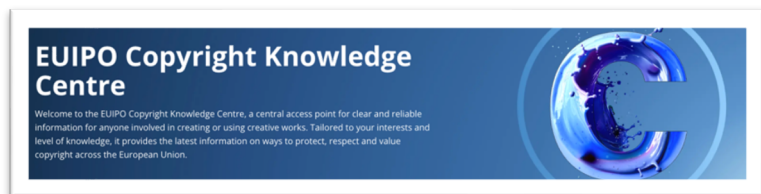
New research underscores the economic importance of copyright sectors. The report *Economic Contribution of Copyright Industries in the Netherlands* shows that copyright sectors accounted for €60 billion (6% of GDP) and 624,000 jobs (8.1% of employment) in 2022. The contribution has remained economically stable since 2005. Software and databases account for the largest share, whilst music and the performing arts create a relatively high number of jobs.

- **USTR: The Netherlands in USTR report^{xv}**

In the 2025 USTR report, the Netherlands is classified as a country with a “high level” of piracy. The report was compiled by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). In recent years, the Netherlands had not been mentioned in such a negative light. The mention may be due to the hosting of illegal sites in the Netherlands or because we have a relatively high percentage of illegal IPTV usage within the EU.

- **Establishment of the EUIPO Copyright Knowledge Centre**

The EUIPO, together with the European Commission, launched the EUIPO Copyright Knowledge Centre^{xvi}. This knowledge centre will support the creative sector in the EU and serve as a platform for dialogue and



coordination. As we do not have a national copyright office in the Netherlands, BREIN is very pleased with the research the EUIPO is already conducting in the field of intellectual property, such as on piracy in all Member States, including the Netherlands. It is expected that further research focused on intellectual property will take place in the future at the initiative of the EUIPO, now that a knowledge centre specifically focused on copyright has been established. We also expect that topics such as the dynamic blocking of infringing websites will be placed on the agenda of the EUIPO Copyright Knowledge Centre.

Footnotes

ⁱ <https://stichtingbrein.nl/trusted-flagger-rapportage-2025/>

ⁱⁱ These figures relate to closed cases. They do not include ongoing projects such as the removal of Google search results, online advertisements and blocked websites, nor cases that are not treated as separate files.

ⁱⁱⁱ Of the 861 cases, 188 involved extensive investigations leading to the removal of an illegal website or, for example, a settlement with an infringer.

^{iv} The total number of domains blocked simultaneously stood at 571 on 1 January 2025. By the end of the year, a total of 303 domains were being blocked. During the year, 402 domains were added and 673 domains were removed/unblocked. Blocking is a dynamic operation, i.e. BREIN monitors this and sends regular updates for the blocking or unblocking of, in particular, proxies and mirrors. This is a labour-intensive exercise. Since 1 January 2018, this has involved thousands of proxies/mirrors across dozens of updates. Changes to the few dozen blocked main domains, as well as a few IP addresses, also occur but much less frequently.

^v BREIN's in-house lawyer also sends the updates to Google, which then removes the reported domains from the search results.

^{vi} That is, following a notice from BREIN. A proxy redirects the user via a different domain to the original website. A mirror is a copy of the content of the original website. In practice, the difference between a proxy and a mirror is not apparent, but both are used to circumvent blocks.

^{vii} Please note that BREIN only reports to Google regarding titles that have been reported to it by rights holders. The number of reports has been decreasing since the start of the blocking of illegal sites. Such blocking involves, on a case-by-case basis, making hundreds of thousands of search results inaccessible. Cyberlockers and YouTube are only notified if a member requests this in a specific case. Many rights holders report (also) via their own 'vendors' and, in the case of YouTube, content is often licensed.

viii Most BREIN cases concern stopping the infringement, usually by taking the site or the infringement(s) offline; only if the responsible party is identified can a settlement be reached or legal proceedings be brought. In a 'knock & talk' procedure, a home visit takes place, sometimes preceded by an ex parte order. A settlement consists of a cease and desist declaration with a contractual penalty and an allowance for costs and any damages.

ix These checks are carried out in consultation with the organisers. The supply of counterfeit vinyl has declined significantly in recent years as a result of regular checks. The supply of so-called radio broadcasts / grey bootlegs has increased. Where possible, BREIN takes action against this. This requires powers of attorney from the artists.

x BREIN also passes on the domains for which it requests blocking by access providers to Google, which removes these websites entirely from its search results. This often removes thousands of illegal search results from the index for each domain in one go. These figures are not included in the total of 189,212 or the shown graphs. A side effect of delisting entire websites in this way is that the number of reports received by BREIN based on individual search results for illegal content is gradually decreasing.

xi In accordance with privacy regulations, BREIN does not publish domain or company names, aliases or other data where these can be traced back to natural persons.

xii <https://stichtingbrein.nl/brein-haalt-artificial-intelligence-dataset-offline/>

xiii <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=190142&doclang=nl>

xiv <https://www.aapa.eu/illicit-iptv-in-europe-an-aapa-economic-report>

xv [https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Issue_Areas/Enforcement/2025%20Special%20301%20Report%20\(final\).pdf](https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Issue_Areas/Enforcement/2025%20Special%20301%20Report%20(final).pdf)

xvi <https://www.euipo.europa.eu/en/copyright-knowledge-centre>

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