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What is OLAF's mandate?

The European Union budget finances a wide range of programmes and projects which improve the lives of citizens across the EU and beyond. Improper use of funds provided by the Union budget or the evasion of the taxes, duties and levies, which fund the Union budget directly harms European citizens and prejudices the entire European project.

It is the responsibility of the European Institutions to **guarantee that the best use is made of taxpayers' money** and to fight fraud as effectively as possible.

The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is to **protect the financial interests of the European Union** by **combating fraud, corruption** and any other illegal activities, including serious misconduct within the European Institutions.

OLAF plays a central role in this objective by:

- Independently **investigating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity** affecting the EU's financial interests, as well as **serious misconduct** within the European Institutions;
- **Assisting Union and national authorities** in their fight against fraud;
- **Deterring and preventing fraud** and strengthening legislation and administrative practices, making it more difficult for fraud and irregularities to occur and so reinforcing public trust in the European project.

How does OLAF operate?

OLAF has budgetary and administrative autonomy, designed to make it operationally independent.

OLAF is empowered to conduct in full independence:

- internal investigations. i.e. inside any European institution or body funded by the EU budget.
- external investigations. i.e. at national level, wherever the EU budget is at stake. For this purpose, OLAF may conduct on-the-spot checks and inspections on the premises of economic operators, in close cooperation with the competent Member State and third-country authorities.

OLAF is receiving an increasing quantity of information about possible frauds and irregularities, from a wide range of sources. In most cases this information results from controls by those responsible for managing EU funds within the Institutions or in the Member States.

All allegations received by OLAF undergo an initial assessment to determine whether the allegation falls within the remit of the Office and

OLAF and the press



OLAF press releases update you on the work of the Office and the fight against fraud.

European Public Prosecutor

Green Paper consultation document on the establishment of a European Public Prosecutors' Office.

The Euro



All you need to know about protecting the Euro against fraud and counterfeiting

Court of Auditors report

Reports of the European Court of Auditors

What's new ?

meets the criteria for opening an investigation.

When a case is opened, it is classified under one of the following four categories:

- **Internal investigations:** Internal investigations are administrative investigations within the European Union institutions and bodies for the purpose of detecting fraud, corruption, and any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the European Communities; including serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties.
- **External investigations:** External investigations are administrative investigations outside the European Union institutions and bodies for the purpose of detecting fraud or other irregular conduct by natural or legal persons. Cases are classified as external investigations where OLAF provides the majority of the investigative input.
- **Coordination cases:** OLAF contributes to investigations carried out by national authorities or other Community departments by facilitating the gathering and exchange of information and contacts.
- **Criminal assistance cases:** Criminal assistance cases are cases in which the competent authorities of a Member State or third country carry out a criminal investigation with assistance from OLAF.