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OLAF signs cooperation arrangement with Ukraine's State Audit Service

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) signed an administrative cooperation arrangement with the State Audit Service of Ukraine (SAS). The arrangement strengthens OLAF's international network and is expected to improve the cooperation between OLAF and SAS at a crucial time for the European Union and Ukraine.

OLAF has cooperated closely with its partners in Ukraine for years now, and is harnessing this good track record to continue to support Ukraine and in order to work together with its national authorities in protecting EU financial interests. The State Audit Service of Ukraine is the national designated contact point for cooperation with OLAF.

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä signed the administrative cooperation arrangement on Monday 27 March in Kyiv during a visit by Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Budget and Administration, Ville Itälä, Director-General of OLAF, and Marek Opiola, Member of the European Court of Auditors.

European Commissioner for Budget and Administration Johannes Hahn said: "*The European Union stands firmly by Ukraine, including financially. For EU and Ukrainian citizens alike, we must make sure that EU financial support to Ukraine is well protected. I appreciate the strong determination and demand of the Ukrainian authorities to further intensify our ongoing cooperation in this area.*"

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: "*I welcome this arrangement, and I am proud to be signing it in Kyiv. The EU will support Ukraine for as long as it takes and OLAF has every intention to keep doing its part. I would like to thank the State Audit Service for the constructive and friendly negotiations of this arrangement. We need to work together to fight fraud effectively, and it was very encouraging to see eagerness to do so in our Ukrainian counterparts. I look forward to our cooperation.*"

The EU's support of Ukraine and its people has been unwavering since the beginning of Russia's aggression. This has also meant unprecedented financial support, and will continue to do so as the reconstruction of Ukraine will require the corresponding funding. The fight against corruption and fraud will be key to ensure that EU and international funding reach those who need it the most and help the country emerge from war damage.

The new arrangement aims to further improve the investigative cooperation between OLAF and the SAS by facilitating the exchange of information and cooperation in investigative activities. In addition to the activities foreseen in the arrangement, OLAF

will contribute both through its investigations and by supporting the Ukrainian authorities in their national anti-fraud efforts and strategies – for example, by helping increase anti-fraud knowledge for prevention, through capacity building and by providing training to protect EU funds.

In addition, both the EU and Ukraine are committed to achieving as soon as possible Ukraine's association to the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), a line of EU funding that is managed by OLAF to support national authorities in their fight against fraud.

In the course of [their visit to Kyiv](#), Commissioner Hahn, Director-General Itälä and ECA Member Opióła also met Olha Stefanyshyna, Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration; Mykhaylo Fedorov, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation; Serhiy Marchenko, Minister of Finance; Oleksandr Korniyenko, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; Andriy Kostin, Prosecutor General of Ukraine; Semen Kryvonos, Director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau; Valeriy Patskan, Head of the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine.

OLAF mission, mandate and competences:

OLAF's mission is to detect, investigate and stop fraud with EU funds.

OLAF fulfils its mission by:

- carrying out independent investigations into fraud and corruption involving EU funds, so as to ensure that all EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can create jobs and growth in Europe;
- contributing to strengthening citizens' trust in the EU Institutions by investigating serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU Institutions;
- developing a sound EU anti-fraud policy.

In its independent investigative function, OLAF can investigate matters relating to fraud, corruption and other offences affecting the EU financial interests concerning:

- all EU expenditure: the main spending categories are Structural Funds, agricultural policy and rural development funds, direct expenditure and external aid;
- some areas of EU revenue, mainly customs duties;
- suspicions of serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU institutions.

Once OLAF has completed its investigation, it is for the competent EU and national authorities to examine and decide on the follow-up of OLAF's recommendations. All persons concerned are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in a competent national or EU court of law.

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