

PRESS RELEASE No 2/2020

27 January 2020

Communicating to stop fraud

On 23 – 24 January, the 29th Meeting of the OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators' Network (OAFCN) took place in Brussels. The conference brought together anti-fraud communicators from across the European Union to share best practices and media strategies on how to expose and deter fraud.

During the two-day conference, communication experts working for anti-fraud public organisations discussed a range of pertinent issues, including communicating Brexit, working with investigative journalists, and providing anti-fraud training to regional authorities. Participants also exchanged insights into online campaign tools, such as how to use crowdfunding and social media channels to catch criminals. Representatives from the newly established European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and OLAF jointly outlined how EPPO intends to cooperate with OLAF and with EU Member States.

The conference also saw contributions from civil society. A representative from Transparency International's Berlin office introduced the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium to the conference and discussed its possible value and importance for law enforcement.

"The OAFCN forum is key if we want to raise awareness of fraud issues," OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said. "We need to step up our communication about the threat of fraud and the countermeasures we are taking. As Director-General of OLAF, I am working very hard to create an environment of trust, and to promote frank and open communication for the benefit of our Institutions and of the European citizens," he added.

Around 40 representatives from OLAF's anti-fraud counterparts in the Member States participated in the discussions.

Background:

The meeting was an annual event organised by the OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators' Network (OAFCN). The [OAFCN](#) was created over a decade ago and is a unique cross-European network of communication experts working on anti-fraud issues. The Network brings together Communication Officers and Spokespersons from OLAF's operational partners in the Member States (i.e. customs, police, law enforcement agencies, Member States' Anti-Fraud Coordination Services (AFCOS) and prosecutors' offices). It plays a pivotal role in communicating the threat of fraud to the public across all EU Member States, as well as the joint efforts made by national and European authorities to combat it. It is a key platform for raising awareness and reaching out to various audiences on fraud issues.

The objectives of OAFCN is to prevent and deter fraud through a permanent dialogue, reinforced cooperation, and joint communication initiatives bringing together communicators from all the European bodies dealing with anti-fraud issues.

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.

For further details:

Jana CAPPELLO
Spokesperson
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
Phone: +32 2 29 85549
E-mail: olaf-media@ec.europa.eu
http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud



Silvana ENCULESCU
Deputy Spokesperson
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
+32 2 29 81764
olaf-media@ec.europa.eu
http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud

