

## **OLAF strengthens cooperation with U.S. partners**

### **Signs key arrangements strengthening mutual support**

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä led a senior OLAF delegation on a mission in the United States. Together with Deputy Director-General Andreas Schwarz, OLAF managers held discussions with key U.S. and international partners with whom OLAF cooperates in fulfilling its mandate to protect the financial interest of the European Union.

The delegation had the opportunity to strengthen multiple areas of collaboration for the protection of the revenue side of the EU budget, particularly customs, intellectual property rights and trade of illicit goods ranging from counterfeit medicines to microchips. The meetings with the international partners provided the opportunity to discuss collaboration on expenditure, particularly the protection of the significant budgetary contributions which the EU makes to various international organisations that amounted to €1.5 billion in 2022.

### **OLAF signs two cooperation arrangements**

OLAF's engagement with its U.S. partners culminated in the signature of two Administrative Cooperation Arrangements. OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: *"It is a pleasure for me to sign these arrangements that continue to foster and strengthen OLAF's operational partnerships with our U.S. counterparts. This is good news for European taxpayers. When we investigate at the European Anti-Fraud Office it is important that we can count on operational support of our international partners, to get a broader overview of trends, while developing a comprehensive international perspective and the ability to connect the dots across borders."*

The arrangement with the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security sets out the framework for cooperation in the fight against customs fraud – including illicit trade, particularly in prohibited or restricted goods. The arrangement provides for multiple cooperation activities, focusing particularly on the exchange of strategic information and risk analysis and assistance in investigations. The enhanced exchange of information and intelligence brings considerable added value to the existing fruitful cooperation between the two organisations and can have a significant impact in the fight against illicit trade.

The second arrangement was signed with the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. International Development Financing Cooperation (DFC) – the U.S. government's development finance institution. The cooperation activities covered within this arrangement includes the prevention of double financing and the possibility of joint or parallel investigations, technical assistance and strategic analysis. The structured cooperation with the DFC Office of Inspector General provides OLAF with an increased oversight in multiple countries where the DFC is active and will further improve the investigative cooperation that exists between the two offices.

### **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.

### **For further details:**

Kirill GELMI  
Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
Phone: +32 2 29 88146  
E-mail: [olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
<https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu>



Theresa ZAHRA  
Deputy Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
+32 2 29 57270  
[olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
<https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu>

