

## 15<sup>th</sup> OAFCN Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Brussels

### 1. *Adoption of the Agenda*

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

### 2. *Approval of the Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> OAFCN Meeting, Brussels, 4 December 2008*

The minutes (including a slight amendment to point 8) were approved.

### 3. *FBI future co-operation in the production of TV drama: debriefing of a visit to the FBI and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)*

Mr Jörg Wojahn (JW) described OLAF's visit to the FBI Communications Unit and ICE in Washington DC in March, which was very successful in terms of opening up doors for communication, as well as revealing that the Americans are very receptive and willing to cooperate with the network. They agreed to hold future joint meetings and projects to extend productions to Europe. It was concluded that transatlantic co-operation could benefit both sides: the OAFCN network can help extend communication beyond community borders and create more European visibility in the US and the FBI can provide its experience in TV drama production. OLAF received the network's mandate to continue this transatlantic collaboration. Mr Alessandro Buttice (AB) introduced Mr Naganori Ko, Public Prosecutor and national expert from Japan, by way of showing that the fight against fraud goes beyond EU borders.

### 4. *Joint Customs Operation (JCO) "Diabolo II"*

Mr Thierry Henne (TH) outlined the very positive results of the JCO Diabolo I (2007) and FAKE (2005), before presenting Diabolo II, a future, similar maritime operation targeting, primarily, the trade of counterfeit cigarettes between Europe and Asia and involving the cooperation of OLAF and Asian partners, i.e. ASEM Working Group on Customs Matters. In order to achieve the same positive results with the press as with Diabolo I, it was stressed that communication is of the utmost importance and, therefore, information should only be communicated by the network at a single press debriefing. If, prior to this, the need arises to inform the public of any particular seizures, reference to Diabolo II should be avoided. The highly confidential nature of this operation was emphasized and TH called on members not to disclose any of the information from the presentation.

AB welcomed Ms Annette Malmberg from Sweden, under whose presidency the operation will take place. Mr Joannes Thuy affirmed Eurojust's commitment to help with communication problems with judicial authorities at national level. Mr Jean-Marie Lequesne enquired about the timescale of the operation and TH said that it should be finished by the end of 2009. AB stressed the importance of using videos/pictures as a means of presenting information and said the Commission's know-how and technical tools can be called upon for help in this respect. He said that it was important that members inform their operational counterparts that they are aware of the operation and that the network will communicate its outcome.

AB concluded that this is an opportunity to provide evidence to the citizen of the collaborative work of OLAF and OAFCN services in the Member States and called on the network's engagement in the project. All members expressed their commitment to get involved and collaborate in the timely assembling of press materials.

## 5. *"The Ethical Journalism Initiative"*

AB introduced Ms Renate Schroeder (RS), European Director of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), who expressed the importance of reinforcing dialogue and mutual trust between journalists and investigators. The Ethical Journalism Initiative (EJI) is a global campaign aimed at supporting and strengthening quality in media. It supports press freedom and citizens' right to know. RS presented a book entitled "To Tell you the Truth" written by the IFJ's General Secretary, Mr Aidan White (AW), with the intention of providing support to journalists. She outlined 4 main points from the IFJ's Code of Conduct, posing ethical challenges to journalists: 1) protection of sources; 2) freedom of information/access to information; 3) respect for privacy vs. journalists' right to investigation; 4) dealing with corruption, namely gifts and conflict of interest.

AB described a critical event involving a journalist, who had asked OLAF questions that included some personal data pertaining to AB which were not in the public domain and which were not all relevant to the questions as such. AB explained that this could have been perceived as a threat or at least as problematic from an ethical point of view. Within the framework of the memorandum with the IFJ, AB had subsequently submitted this issue to AW.

AB suggested dedicating a seminar to the subject of ethics and encouraged members to get hold of a copy of the IFJ publication to spread the word amongst their services. He concluded with the commitment for OLAF and the IFJ to continue their successful dialogue, whereby OLAF acts as a bridge between the IFJ and the OAFCN network, but members were also encouraged to establish their own bilateral dialogues, bypassing Brussels.

## 6. *Bulgarian TV film "OLAF – The Euro Funds Watchdog": latest developments*

AB introduced Ms Reneta Nikolova (RN), President of the Bulgarian Club-Journalists Against Corruption. RN thanked AB, Mr Franz-Hermann Brüner and the IFJ for their support in the project. The film, presented at a seminar in Sofia, was shown on Bulgarian National Television, as well as on the satellite channel, TV Bulgaria, and Euronews has expressed an interest in it. An English version was consequently produced and presented at an OLAF management meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. RN said that a subsequent film about the Spanish experience in the fight against fraud and corruption had been produced and would be presented at a seminar from 22-23 May in Sofia, to which members were invited.

Clips from the film were shown and AB said it would also be shown at the European Commission Open Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May. He praised the objectivity of the film, which gives a voice to different parties, including journalists and critics of OLAF, and said that it is a good example of the synergy between the network and press associations.

## 7. *Development of relations with the National Federation of Italian Press – National Union of Italian Reporters: "Piero Passetti Reporter Prize"*

AB gave the floor to Mr Carlo Felice Corsetti (CFC), who described the Piero Passetti Reporter Prize as an example of the fruitful cooperation with OLAF. Recognized at European and international level, the prize is awarded to national journalists working in the interest of investigative services. OLAF was not only part of the Honorary Prize Committee, but also awarded a plaque to the winner at the official ceremony in Viareggio (3-5 April 2009). The prize went to 3 Italian journalists, who had demonstrated outstanding professional, social and human commitment.

AB concluded that there is a need to increase cooperation with national press associations and that the network provides a platform for discussion with international organisations, as well as at local level.

He welcomed Mr Max Strotmann (MS), Spokesperson to Vice-President Siim Kallas, and informed him of the network's engagement in Diabolo II.

On behalf of Vice-President Siim Kallas, MS thanked the Network and its members for their excellent work and their joint efforts in preventing and fighting against fraud by informing the public and therefore reducing the distance between Europe and its citizens.

#### *8. UK relations with the media concerning the seizure of fake Nintendo games consoles last December*

AB gave the floor to Mr Paul Mathews (PM) (HM Revenue & Customs), who described how a customs' seizure had been turned into a major national news story, showing how important the media can be as a means of communicating anti-fraud messages. Last December, the Press Office was informed of the seizure of some fake Nintendo games consoles, coming from websites based in Asia. The Press Office launched a media campaign, the coverage of which ran on all national TV channels. As a result, approximately £2.5 million worth of fake consoles were seized, including people handing them in. PM concluded that the cooperation of different organisations was an important factor in the success of the campaign. In terms of improvements for future campaigns, a cross-border warning could create an even bigger impact and the network could be used to distribute news releases throughout the EU media.

Mr Julien Coudray said that, in France, fake Nintendo games consoles had also been seized and presented to the press via a media campaign. He asked who had been chosen to give the TV interviews. PM replied that, although they had used media-trained spokespeople, customs officers could also be used provided they are trained in interview techniques. Mr Gennaro Vecchione suggested that OLAF help circulate news releases throughout the network and AB said that only those with explicit reference to OLAF can be published on its website.

#### *9. New scanning system in the Port of Koper (Slovenia)*

AB gave the floor to Mr Brane Gregoric (Slovene Customs) who described the procurement of a new X-ray scanner and the accompanying media event. The Port of Koper, an important port, has witnessed a constant increase in container traffic, but limited resources made it impossible to control it all. Furthermore, the introduction of new scanning legislation in the US stipulated that all containers destined there had to be 100% scanned. The scanner, co-financed by OLAF, was consequently purchased. It is able to search 8-10,000 containers per year and complies with the US legislation. Other advantages are that it can be easily relocated and can detect gamma radiation, useful for countering terrorism. As well as creating a positive image of customs in the fight against fraud, the media initiative revealed the good cooperation with OLAF. The news item received extensive coverage, broadcast on major national news channels. AB said that, in future, it is important to use the network to disseminate and amplify the press release throughout Europe.

#### *10. Organisation of the 9<sup>th</sup> OAFCN Training Seminar, Warsaw, 24-26 June 2009*

AB said the seminar would revisit the theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> OAFCN seminar and provide training (including workshops) in TV interview techniques. The focus will be on the different styles of journalism in Europe, with the aim of better equipping participants in dealing with the foreign media. There would be the same trainers as at the 1<sup>st</sup> seminar in 2002. AB said the training was not restricted to OAFCN members, but was also open to other colleagues, within OAFCN partner services, dealing with the media. He thanked Ms Agnieszka Krolikowska and Ms Dorota Kwiecińska (DK) for the Polish collaboration in hosting the event, before giving the

latter the floor. DK explained that preparations for the seminar were at an advanced stage and thanked AB and his team for their fruitful cooperation.

#### *11. OAFCN website: a new project*

AB introduced Ms Olga Ferreira (OF), OLAF Webmaster Editor, who described the project to update the OLAF website, which will include a secure site dedicated to the OAFCN and uses Web 2.0. This communication platform will allow secure communication between OLAF and its operational partners. WordPress was chosen as the web creation platform. Furthermore, it is an Open Source project, used by many well-reputed organisations.

Mr Jean-Marie Lequesne suggested dedicating a section of the website to examples of good practice, with links to the respected sites. AB said this was feasible, but first, legal issues would need to be resolved to safeguard OLAF. He urged members to keep OLAF informed of any changes/updates to their sites, links to which are on the OLAF website. He proposed the creation of a page dedicated to a community of OAFCN webmasters and asked members to send the contact details of their respective colleagues as soon as possible.

#### *12. OAFCN membership*

AB reminded members of the decision at the last seminar to include 2 new associate members in the network and expressed the need for future rules regarding membership. He gave the floor to Mr David Jones (UK Serious Fraud Office) who presented his draft codification. There are 2 categories of membership: 1) a Member, representing a state authority, and including communication representatives from OLAF's operational partners; 2) an Associate Member, representing a non-government body. The latter members cannot vote on policy and strategy issues, but can contribute to all other aspects of the debate.

AB praised the draft, but said that it would be necessary to look at the legal aspects in more detail. Mr Nico Dusseldorf said that the document didn't require any changes and was ready to be voted on. AB subsequently put the document to the vote, which was **passed by consensus**, with no votes against. AB said that the document would still need to be approved by OLAF's Director-General<sup>1</sup>, as well as vetted by the Commission's Legal Service.

#### *13. European Institutions' Open Day 2009 with the involvement of the OAFCN*

AB gave the floor to Ms Anna Giglio, who said it was the 4<sup>th</sup> year that OLAF was participating with the OAFCN network in the Open Day and outlined its key elements. She explained the role of OLAF and OAFCN representatives at the stand, the title of which would be "A Europe of Legality against International Fraud", with the aim of informing the public about OLAF's activities in the fight against fraud. The stand would comprise 3 main parts: OLAF's cooperation with its national partners, who would give an overview of their services; the Bulgarian film about OLAF produced by the BCJAC; and an interactive game.

AB introduced his unit's new stagiaire, Ms Emily Fairless, and thanked her for her valuable contribution to the work of the team.

#### *14. Any other business*

No other issues were discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of the Director-General, Mr. Brüner, of 7 July 2009 (OLAF ref. D/006215).