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## **OLAF partners with German judicial authorities to investigate a million euro case of possible misuse of EU research funds**

**The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in a joint operation with German judicial authorities and French police at the end of June: valuable evidence secured in a fraud case concerning EU funds in the research field.**

The basis of the investigation was allegations into, amongst others, the possible embezzlement and misuse of several millions of euros of EU research funds by a company, which did not pay out as contractually required amounts due to its partners in the research project, whilst also fraudulently avoiding insolvency proceedings.

As part of the operations, German authorities conducted searches of commercial premises and private homes of persons concerned in various locations in Germany. French police also carried out simultaneous searches in France, based on a request for mutual legal assistance by the German judicial authorities. OLAF participated in the searches, which had been coordinated in advance with the help of the EU judicial authority, Eurojust.

Ville Itälä, Director-General of OLAF, underlines the importance of such joint operations: *"As fraud knows no borders, none of us is able to counter it on our own. To ensure that EU funds do not end up in the pockets of fraudsters, OLAF and the judicial authorities of the Member States need to work together and this joint operation is an excellent example of how it shall work in practice"*.

As a result of the searches, the German authorities seized huge amounts of evidence essential for the development of the investigation, which is ongoing.

For further details, please see also the press release of the German prosecutor's office of Mannheim:

<http://www.stamannheim.de/pb/,Lde/Durchsuchungen+in+Deutschland+und+Frankreich+wegen+Verdachts+der+Untreue+und+des+Subventionsbetrugs+im+Zusammenhang+mit+EU-Foerdermitteln/?LISTPAGE=1229636>

### **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.

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