



EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE

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With billions at stake, OLAF and Ukraine commit to deepening cooperation against fraud

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) have today signed an Administrative Cooperation Arrangement (ACA) to step up efforts to counter fraud against the European Union's financial interests. The ACA is based on, and implements, the comprehensive anti-fraud provisions in the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Protecting EU funds disbursed in Ukraine is particularly crucial following the adoption of the European Commission financial support package, which has an initial volume of 11 billion euro.

The arrangement will allow OLAF and NABU to conduct joint investigative activities and to share information crucial to examining allegations of fraud or irregularities affecting the EU budget. The partners will cooperate in the area of capacity-building as well, facilitating trainings aimed at developing the expertise of NABU staff members.

The ACA was signed by Mr Giovanni Kessler, the OLAF Director-General, who is on mission in Kiev on 19-21 October. Mr Kessler has taken active steps to promote the development of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and was engaged in the process of selecting its Head, Mr Artem Sytnyk.

"Ukraine needs to eradicate a legacy of fraud and corruption, it owes that to its people," Kessler said. "OLAF has pledged to stand by the side of the national authorities in this endeavour," he added.

OLAF's Director-General will also use the opportunity of his mission to Kiev to engage in a discussion with representatives of the National Agency for Corruption Prevention on the most effective means of collaboration. Moreover, he will analyse recent developments in Ukraine and their impact on the fight against corruption with colleagues from the EU Delegation in Kiev.

Over the last years, OLAF has regularly liaised with national authorities in Ukraine and supported the overall efforts of establishing an efficient institutional and legal framework on fighting fraud and corruption. This year was the first time Ukrainian authorities were represented as observers in the annual seminar of Anti-Fraud Coordination Services, an event which brings together national anti-fraud services from EU candidate and potential candidate countries.

Background:

The EU and Ukraine signed an Association Agreement on 27 June 2014. The Association Agreement will enter into force as soon as the ratification procedures in all 28 Member States are finalised. The general provisions and part of the political and cooperation association chapters are already being applied provisionally since November 2014. This includes comprehensive Anti-Fraud provisions, which regulate the obligations of the competent Ukrainian authorities to cooperate in fighting and investigating fraud and corruption affecting the EU funds going to 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.

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