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## **Former MEP sentenced to 5 years in prison in a case triggered by an OLAF investigation**

**A court in the United Kingdom has today sentenced former Member of European Parliament Ashley Mote to five years in prison. Mr Mote was found guilty of several fraud-related offences committed to the detriment of the European Parliament's budget. The court case was triggered by an investigation of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of 2010 and a subsequent investigation by British authorities.**

The OLAF investigation focused on the expenditure of a part of Mr Mote's allowances for hiring parliamentary assistance through a specific service provider. OLAF gathered evidence showing that the MEP, by presenting false and misleading documents to the European Parliament, diverted EUR 355,000 into private accounts.

OLAF's investigation was closed at the end of 2010. The OLAF final report was sent to the European Parliament with a recommendation for financial recovery of the unduly claimed expenses, and to the UK judiciary with the recommendation to consider criminal proceedings. The subsequent, extended, UK police investigation did not only confirm OLAF's findings, but also revealed that more payments of the MEP's parliamentary assistance allowance were paid on the basis of false and misleading documents which Mr Mote submitted to the Parliament.

On the basis of the OLAF and the UK police investigations, the trial at London's Southwark Crown started on 20 April. The jury also heard an OLAF investigator as a witness. Mr Mote was found guilty of 11 offences in May. Today, the court sentenced Mr Mote to five years in prison.

### **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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