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OLAF intelligence supports Lithuanian Customs in major sanctions evasion probe

On 10 April, investigators from the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) joined officers from the Lithuanian Customs Criminal Service (MKT) in a successful raid on a company suspected of violating EU sanctions.

The investigation targeted a business allegedly involved in the illegal export of sanctioned goods to Russia and Belarus. While the items in question were lawfully manufactured in various EU Member States, it is believed the company rerouted them through Central Asian countries to circumvent EU sanctions.

During the inspection, significant quantities of potentially sanctioned commodities, large sums of money and weapons were seized. Prior to the raid, OLAF provided intelligence and analytical support that proved instrumental in uncovering a suspected scheme to evade EU export restrictions. Preliminary findings also suggest the company may have facilitated similar operations for other firms.

The pre-trial investigation, led by the Vilnius Regional Prosecutor's Office, estimates the value of the seized goods at approximately €1.5 million.

OLAF provided investigative support, advanced analytical tools and relevant data throughout the investigation. As the investigation remains ongoing, OLAF is also liaising with authorities in both EU and non-EU countries to verify the export routes and trace the final destination of the goods. The intelligence gathered will support other EU Member States in discovering potential new illicit trade flows of sanctioned goods.

OLAF Director-General Ville Itälä said: *"OLAF remains committed to supporting EU Member States in upholding sanctions and protecting the financial interests of the Union. In this case, OLAF provided investigative intelligence and analysis, while also acting as a bridge between the different national authorities involved. We are glad to have been able to support our Lithuanian colleagues in such a crucial effort as the enforcement of the EU's export sanctions. Together we help strengthen the security of the EU."*

[Read the press release issued by the Lithuanian Customs](#)

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.

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