

CONCLUSIONS OF OAFCN 9th MEETING, BRUSSELS 12-13 JUNE 2006

- 1.** It was agreed that the OAFCN would be the theme for the next European Commission 2007 Open Day with possible participation of representatives of OLAF's partners. There would be a common European message conveyed to the citizens of international cooperation which could be adapted for national open days.
- 2.** The sixth training seminar 'Transparency as a means of fighting fraud and corruption' was announced. The dates have been fixed for the seminar in Sofia, Bulgaria, for the 9-11 October 2006, organised by OLAF, in conjunction with the Ministry of Interior. This will be a reinforced dialogue with international journalist associations, in collaboration with the OAFCN partners. The seminar will demonstrate the cooperation between journalists and the OAFCN, and will highlight the activities of the Member States. This is in line with the implementation of a policy of transparency and openness in the everyday work of the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior. OLAF will cover the costs of flights and accommodation for the seminar.
- 3.** The 2005 OLAF Annual Activity report is due to be published by mid July on the same day as the Commission Report. It was agreed that OLAF partner services in the 25 Member States and acceding countries should publish press releases adapted to the activities of each national service. This would be an opportunity to tell public opinion what is being done together in order to protect the Communities' financial interests, quite independently of the contents of the report, and would show the joint success in the fight against fraud between the OAFCN and OLAF.
- 4.** OAFCN members agreed to strive within their services to ensure that media aspects are taken into consideration when multi-national operations are being prepared. The members welcomed again the good results of the 'joint communication strategy on Joint Customs Operation "Fake" in 2005.
- 5.** It was agreed that OLAF would send a letter of moral support to the International Press Association (IPA) on behalf of the OAFCN to show support for the Gala initiative to celebrate the 30th anniversary of this association for journalists, collecting funds for journalists in certain countries in difficult circumstances. This would be a personal gesture as members of the Network, and as a sign of solidarity.
- 6.** The OAFCN members took note that the IFJ have just completed the response to the Commission's communication questionnaire on various aspects of EU's communications policy. In this response the IFJ have again highlighted the need for much more transparency, disclosure, openness, a commitment to 'open' government. The IFJ have some positive proposals to make, certainly in the EU's communication policy where that can be improved.
- 7.** The OAFCN members took note that the IFJ have written to the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament asking for more clarity on the question of transnational cooperation between police forces and security forces specifically related to monitoring the work of journalists. Commissioner Frattini is investigating their complaints. The IFJ are concerned with the problems that face

the good journalists; telephones that have been bugged, journalists who are being followed because they have the best sources of information, who are likely to be following the most reliable traces and so on. This is becoming a serious matter of concern for the IFJ.

- 8.** The OAFCN members welcomed the presentation made by Rosalind Wright, Chair of the OLAF Supervisory Committee. They took note that the principle responsibility of the Supervisory Committee is to ensure that OLAF has the ability to operate in that area of independence. The members of the Supervisory Committee are also extremely concerned with the operation of OLAF itself, with its effectiveness as a tool against fraud involving the financial interests of the European Community. For the Supervisory Committee, OLAF is doing an effective job in combating fraud and the public and the governments should be aware of that.