



EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE No 4/2016

22 February 2016

Romanian Members of Parliament prosecuted following OLAF investigation

Romanian anti-corruption prosecutors have initiated criminal proceedings against 12 persons, including two Members of the Romanian Parliament, following an investigation conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and finalised in July 2015.

OLAF examined the project entitled "*Social Entrepreneurship. A Chance for the Roma Communities*," which was co-financed by the European Social Fund. The project aimed at training young Roma, a vulnerable minority in Romania, on aspects of social entrepreneurship, thus supporting their social inclusion. Following investigative activities, including an on-the-spot check at the premises of the project beneficiary *Association Partida Romilor – Pro Europa*, OLAF not only discovered the project was just partly implemented, but uncovered a fraudulent scheme that had been established to divert a part of the salaries of the project staff back into the organisation's budget. In practice, the management of the association forced employees to pay some of their wages back to the association as "donations." OLAF estimates that 4.6 million euros have been defrauded from the European Union budget in this manner.

In August 2015, OLAF communicated the results of its investigation to the Romanian Judicial Authority, the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA), recommending the initiation of judicial proceedings. Romanian anti-corruption prosecutors have currently asked the Chamber of Deputies to approve prosecution and preventive detention measures against Madalin Voicu and Nicolae Paun, the Members of the Romanian Parliament suspected in this case.

"This case is yet another example of OLAF closely cooperating with the Romanian authorities to bring fraudsters to justice," OLAF Director-General Giovanni Kessler said. *"We must ensure that European money, particularly funds designated to improve the lives of people who face discrimination, are spent in a correct and proper manner,"* he added.

For more information, please see the [press release](#) issued by the National Anticorruption Directorate (available in Romanian).

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.

For further details:

Silvana ENCULESCU

Acting Spokesperson

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Phone: +32 2 298 17 64

E-mail: olaf-media@ec.europa.eu

http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud