



EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE No 16/2024

24 September 2024

OLAF hosts G7 Sub-Working Group on Export Control Enforcement

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) hosted a meeting of the G7 Sub-Working Group on Export Control Enforcement. Experts from the Group of Seven countries and OLAF met in Brussels on 24 September 2024 to discuss the latest developments in the fight against the circumvention of sanctions and export controls that restrict Russia's access to technologies and other materials required to sustain its military operations.

The meeting brought together experts from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, who, together with OLAF investigators, discussed a set of coordinated measures to provide guidance to the industry on how to prevent the diversion of controlled items to Russia, including through third countries. The group decided to publish a [joint guidance for industry](#) with the aim of facilitating the identification of ever-changing circumvention practices, especially regarding items that pose a heightened risk of diversion. The guidance document contains red flag indicators of possible evasion and aims to provide operators with comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge. This will ensure the continued success of existing export controls and sanctions, as well as to help protect technology from being misappropriated.

Ville Itälä, Director-General of OLAF, reiterated that: *"We, at OLAF, are keen to support our partners in their endeavours to enforce the export sanctions imposed on Russia and Belarus. Sanctions are only as effective as their enforcement, and we are proud to contribute actively in all undertakings intended to consolidate the efforts to combat Russia's illicit procurement efforts"*.

The sub-working group reviewed the key achievements from its first year of operations and the best practices to-date. Participants also received an update regarding current trends and discussed the priorities and objectives of the sub-working group for the coming year.

Background

OLAF is active in the [enforcement of the sanction packages](#) implemented against Russia and Belarus. OLAF conducts direct enquiries of potential breaches and cooperates with partners in the EU and beyond to share knowledge and create a collaborative approach to defending the packages and consequently Ukraine itself. OLAF [has been monitoring](#) trade flows and performing analytical work to detect possible fraudulent circumvention of import/export sanctions since the European Union adopted the first measures in 2022. In June 2023 OLAF hosted a [joint enforcement meeting](#) to tackle attempts of circumvention of the EU's sanctions against Russia and Belarus. In April 2024 OLAF hosted the first in person meeting of the Sub-Working Group and actively contributes to the regular meetings.

The International Group of Seven (“G7”) is an intergovernmental forum whose members include the US, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, and Japan, with the European Union as a “non-enumerated” member. In February 2023 the G7 announced the creation of a new Enforcement Coordination Mechanism “to bolster compliance and enforcement of our measures and deny Russia the benefits of G7 economies.”

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.

For further details:

Pierluigi CATERINO
Spokesperson
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
Phone: +32 2 29 88146
E-mail: olaf-media@ec.europa.eu
<https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu>

 [@EUAntiFraud](https://twitter.com/EUAntiFraud)
 [European Anti-Fraud Office](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-anti-fraud-office/)

Theresa ZAHRA
Deputy Spokesperson
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
+32 2 29 57270
olaf-media@ec.europa.eu
<https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu>

 [@EUAntiFraud](https://twitter.com/EUAntiFraud)
 [European Anti-Fraud Office](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-anti-fraud-office/)