

29. Conclusions

At the end of the meeting Mr Butticé set out what were agreed by general consensus to be the conclusions of the meeting:

- (a) The OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators Network (OAFCN) should aim to create permanent synergies and contacts between OLAF's institutional communication service and its counterparts in the national investigation services (Spokespersons, Directors of communication, etc.), in order to promote information to the general public and in particular to the media relating to the fight against fraud to the detriment of the Community financial interests, to encourage co-operation and to reach a larger audience.
- (b) The OAFCN forms part of the external independent communication strategy of OLAF as set out in document OLAF/COCOLAF/1706 of 06.04.2001 and is one of the instruments of the Communication Policy of the Office as set out in Chapter 17 (Media Relations) of the OLAF manual.
- (c) The overall goal of the OAFCN should be and must remain the idea of informing the European citizen of what we are doing jointly and individually as services to protect their financial interests.
- (d) The OAFCN should try to add value to the work of the national inquiry services and the work done not only in one Member State but show the Community aspect of the fight against fraud.
- (e) The OAFCN will endeavour to reinforce the message that it is only through close co-operation that OLAF and its national investigative partners can hope to counter the criminals and fraudsters who organise their illicit activities at the international level.
- (f) It is essential for the OAFCN to point out the success stories that arise from the different national investigative services working together and to show that neither they nor the Community will tolerate fraud.
- (g) The tools to be used by OAFCN members will be to produce and increase production of joint media actions such as videos, photos and press releases to show OLAF on the ground working with the national investigative services and the services working together through the good offices of OLAF.
- (h) OAFCN members should as soon as possible, institute and activate web links between their various homepages so as to demonstrate in concrete terms their active co-operation in the area of operational communication, the co-operation of their services in the fight against fraud and to multiply the visits to their respective websites.
- (i) Within the context of operational and legal possibilities OAFCN members should inform each other regarding press releases of mutual interest and should assist journalists forwarded to them by other OAFCN members.
- (j) Within the context of operational possibilities the members should also try to inform each other regarding press articles or television programmes which may be of interest.
- (k) The OAFCN should be continue to be based on the level of the national investigative services co-operating together so that the shared operational goals can be kept in sight.
- (l) Attempts should be made to increase the profile and image of the OAFCN members' national services, through co-operation on the ground between national investigative services working together and services working with OLAF.

- (m) The idea of organising future seminars and training exercised for members and/or for journalists should be looked into further and all ideas were welcome.
- (n) Each OAFCN member shall communicate to the other members a list of competent contact persons in their administration in the area of communication, public relations and website management and should endeavour to keep this list updated, OLAF will be responsible for managing, updating and circulating this information.
- (o) The OAFCN was, by general consensus, a positive development which should be encouraged and developed.