



Press Release

Number 3 of 26.01.2017

Page 1 of 2

HAUSANSCHRIFT

Am Propsthof 78a

53121 Bonn

TEL +49 (0)228/99682-7200

FAX +49 (0)228/99682-7210

www.zoll.de

ANSPRECHPARTNER

Stefan Kirsch

TEL +49 (0) 228/303 11611

pressestelle.gzd@zoll.bund.de

Close Cooperation: German Customs and the European Anti-Fraud Office

Giovanni Kessler, Head of OLAF meets Customs Director General Uwe Schröder in Bonn

On January 25 German Customs Director General Uwe Schröder and the Director General of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) Giovanni Kessler met at the Customs Headquarters in Bonn to discuss strategic matters in view to enhancing operational cooperation between their services.

Uwe Schröder underlines: *"In the fight against smuggling, fraud and corruption, close cooperation is a core element. Therefore we need to join competences and powers of both authorities. All over Europe we benefit of coordination support by OLAF, which will also be shown by the results of the meeting. That's why I am very interested in a continuous personal contact and the exchange of view with the Head of OLAF."*

OLAF has been closely liaising with German authorities in the last years, particularly in the fight against illicit trade that severely affects the EU and national budgets, causing substantial losses of revenue. (For example, at the end of 2014, a joint operation coordinated by OLAF and by the Italian and German law enforcement authorities led to the dismantling of an international tobacco contraband network and several arrests.)

"We rely on the customs authorities of the Member States to ensure that the EU borders are protected and that products smuggled by criminal networks are prevented from entering European soil," Giovanni Kessler said. *"I am very much looking forward to an even stronger partnership with German authorities, so that together we can counter the threats facing our common market and offer the best protection possible to our taxpayers,"* he added.



Press Release

Number 3 of 26.01.2017

Page 2 of 2

In January 2016 the reorganization of German Customs and the establishment of the Central Customs Authority were completed. The General Customs Authority and the Customs Criminological Office are responsible for the close cooperation with OLAF and are (committed to intensifying work on) an international level.

Information Box:

An Italian public prosecutor with an expertise in organised crime, Giovanni Kessler became Director-General of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in 2011. OLAF is the only European body mandated to investigate fraud involving European Union funds, as well as serious misconduct by staff and members of the EU institutions. As OLAF's Head, Mr. Kessler prompted a reorganisation of the Office, leading to a significant increase in its investigative performance.

OLAF helps authorities inside and outside the EU to understand fraud types, trends, threats and risks in order to protect the EU's financial interests by preventing and fighting fraud. OLAF also organizes training on fraud detection and on identifying risk indicators.

Tobacco smuggling causes heavy yearly losses to the budgets of Member States and the EU in evaded customs duties and taxes. Moreover smuggled tobacco poses great risks to the consumers and the businesses. So OLAF coordinates efforts to fight tobacco smuggling across the EU.