

## **Member States make progress in detecting and preventing fraud with EU funds**

**In 2015, Member States have improved their fraud detection and prevention capacities, according to the European Commission's annual report on the protection of the European Union's financial interests ('PIF Report') adopted on 14 July 2016. The report shows that Member States are taking a more strategic approach to protecting the EU budget, with more targeted control actions focusing on high-impact cases. Cooperation between Member States and with the Commission has worked well, in particular on the revenue side, where large-scale Joint Customs Operations have averted significant losses to the EU and national budgets. Member States and the Commission track irregularities and fraud throughout the entire lifecycle of the multi-annual EU spending programmes. This allows for adequate controls, corrections or recoveries to occur at the relevant stages of EU spending, to ensure the highest possible protection of taxpayers' money.**

The PIF report highlights the efforts made by Member States in 2015 to target their investigative activities on the cases with the highest financial impact. Member States also took numerous measures to improve the detection, investigation and prosecution of fraud cases involving EU funds, as well as to ensure the adequate recoveries and sanctions. Eight Member States adopted national anti-fraud strategies in the course of the year, while work is on-going in the majority of the other Member States, as recommended by the Commission.

Co-operation between the customs authorities of Member States, third countries and the Commission on targeted Joint Customs Operations (JCOs) has delivered concrete results in combating the illicit cross-border trafficking in goods. The JCOs focused on specific areas at risk of fraud on the revenue side of the budget, such as counterfeiting, undervaluation of goods at import or the smuggling of goods into the EU.

Despite the progress achieved, the Commission continues to encourage Member States to put even more effort into ensuring that money from the EU budget is correctly used for projects that contribute to growth and jobs in Europe, for instance by enhancing the use of IT tools to improve the targeting of checks and verifications.

The report also sets out the state of play of significant initiatives taken by the Commission in 2015 to counter fraud affecting the EU budget. These measures build on the comprehensive anti-fraud programme that the Commission put forward in previous years (see also press release [11/783](#)).

### **Background:**

Member States manage approximately 80% of the EU budget, in areas such as agriculture, fisheries and cohesion policy. The PIF report, which is based on information

reported by the Member States, is prepared annually under Article 325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It provides an in-depth analysis of the approaches, procedures and tools used by the Member States in their fight against fraud. The report also assesses which areas of activity are most at risk of fraud, thereby enabling both the Commission and Member States to better target anti-fraud actions. While anti-fraud remains primarily a Member-State responsibility, the Commission works closely with Member States to share best practices, ensure coordination and provide guidelines.

The report is available on the [OLAF website](#).

See also: [EU 2015 accounts adopted: performance focus shows the EU budget is delivering](#) (European Commission press release)

**For further details:**

Alina BUREA  
Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
Phone +32(0)2 29-57336  
Email [olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/anti-fraud>



Silvana ENCULESCU  
Deputy Spokesperson  
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)  
+32(0)2 29-81764  
[olaf-media@ec.europa.eu](mailto:olaf-media@ec.europa.eu)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/anti-fraud>

