

**Speech of Mr Franz-Hermann Bruener, Director General of OLAF
at the Closing Ceremony of the
OLAF Anti-fraud Communicators' Network Training Seminar,
Bucharest Romania 22 October 2003**

Your Excellency Mr Prime Minister, Mr Ponta, Ladies and Gentlemen, I think that on behalf of all those who have participated in this seminar I can say that it is a great honour that you have joined us here today to help us close the seminar.

It is a genuine sign of the fact that the work of all those who have participated in the work of the seminar is being taken seriously by the Romanian State, and that the fight against fraud and corruption, as a whole, is also seen as being a very important task at national as well as at international level.

Mr Ponta and his colleagues have really put a lot of time and effort into the organisation of this event, and I think that I am speaking for all of the participants in expressing my appreciation of their efforts. Their effort in organisation is also reflected in their efforts in dealing with fraud nothing is being hidden away in this regard. This seminar has given rise to a lot of new knowledge on how we can better communicate to the public what is being done to protect their interests and to tackle fraud.

One of the lessons that I have learned in Romania is that exposure of fraud is always seen in negative terms. It is never the case that when a case of fraud is established there is also a positive side in that the exposure of the case is a positive step to publicly address the problem. Contrary to popular belief, fraud is not something that has been invented recently, it existed in Roman times and we have even stories of fraud from the Babylonian era. Fraud is not a new phenomenon and it is not a Romanian or other candidate country phenomenon; it is global problem and it exists everywhere with serious consequences.

This Seminar brings together the people who have to get this message across to the public. I believe that this seminar has meant that we will be better able to communicate between ourselves better and to understand each other. We have brought together the various candidate countries here so that they too can meet and so that we can all learn from the experience.

During our time here we have seen the political commitment of the Romanian authorities to the fight against corruption, person who have taken part can go home and say that they have attended an anti-fraud event at which both the President and the Prime Minister of the host country participated – showing the importance that the Romanian government attaches to this issue.

I hope that we can all come away from this event with an increased appreciation of the importance of communication in dealing with fraud. I thank you for the possibility to address you and for your active participation in this important event.