



Valsts policija

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Čiekurkalna 1. līnija 1, k – 4, Rīga, LV – 1026, tālr. 67075088, fakss 67075053, e-pasts san@vp.gov.lv

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Last year attempts to defraud the EU funds were prevented in a total amount of 20 million euro

One of the priority areas of the State Police of Latvia is combat of the European Union (EU) fund defraud schemes. During 2016 the Police initiated 18 criminal procedures regarding the improper use of the EU funds and prevented defraud of the funds in a total amount of more than 20 million euro. If compared with 2015, the prevented threat valued at 14 millions euro.

Combat of crimes related to improper use of the EU funds has been set as one of the priorities for the State Police in 2017. Such investigations are mainly conducted by the Economic Crime Enforcement Department (ENAP) of the State Police of Latvia. Last year the ENAP transferred for criminal prosecution seven criminal procedures related to defraud of the EU funds.

The analysis conducted by the ENAP indicates that cases related to defraud of the EU funds have been decreased if compared with 2015, while the overall threat estimation in terms of money in 2016 was higher. The information collected during the investigations leads to the conclusion that such crimes are primarily conducted by organized groups, consisting of former or current entrepreneurs. These persons for their fraud schemes mostly attracts either economic operators from other EU Member States or offshore companies in duty-free and low-tax areas. Crimes are committed carefully and by utilizing various economic documents, such as purchase agreements, loan agreements and various other agreements.

While investigating these crimes, the ENAP actively cooperates with representatives of the Prosecutor's Office and other law enforcement authorities, as well as representatives of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and the State Chancellery. According to the ENAP chief Peteris Bauska, mutual cooperation between the involved parties is a very important component to successfully conclude complicated investigations,

„The investigation procedure for such cases is very complicated, because it requires extensive analysis of various information and documentation, e.g. voluminous studies of account statements, as well as international cooperation between law enforcement authorities of various countries. Therefore, in order to effectively conclude such cases, it is of utmost importance to ensure qualitative and timely exchange of information between services, which supervise the

fund allocation and utilization and other law enforcement authorities.”

In order to successfully combat defraud of the EU funds, cooperation and regular exchange of information with representatives of EU fund distribution organizations will continue, as well as preventive measures and educational activities for officials administering the EU funds. In 2016 various mutual meetings, workshops and training activities were held and representatives of the State Police of Latvia attended meetings and exchange events organized by the European Commission and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). Such activities promote cooperation between institutions involved in the administration of the EU funds, other foreign financial assistance organizations, and law enforcement authorities.

Prepared by:

Dairis Anučins

Deputy Chief of the Public Relations Department of the State Police of Latvia

Phone: +371 2940 2290;

E-mail: dairis.anucins@vp.gov.lv

Web page: <http://www.vp.gov.lv/?langid=1>