

Convictions in EPPO Cases: April – July 2022



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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News

After having assumed its operational tasks in June 2021, the EPPO recently reported on the first convictions in EPPO cases in several EU countries (for the first conviction of an EPPO case ever → [euclid 4/2021, 210](#)). The following gives an overview of these verdicts:

- 11 July 2022: The Zagreb County Court issues the [first verdict in an EPPO case in Croatia](#). The verdict concerns an attempt of subsidy fraud in which the owner of a family farm presented a falsified certification in order to obtain funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Since the accused confessed to the offence, he was sentenced to prison for a period of 10 months, which was then replaced by community service.
- 30 June 2022: The [Specialised Criminal Court in Bulgaria sentences the manager of a wine company](#) to one year's imprisonment, suspended for three years, and a fine of BGN 2000 (around €1000). The manager was accused for attempted subsidy fraud because he forged company offers in order to meet the requirements for receiving financial aid (worth €400,000) from the EU's Support Programme for the promotion of wines to third countries. The managing authority detected the irregularity and forwarded the case to Bulgaria's prosecution offices. After starting of operations, the EPPO in Bulgaria took over the case. The decision by the Specialised Criminal Court is based on an agreement between the EPPO and the defendant who pleaded guilty. It is the first conviction in an investigation by the EPPO in Bulgaria.
- 20 June 2022: A [District Court in Riga, Latvia confirms an agreement](#) between the EDP and accused persons punishing them for procurement fraud of over €100,000. In the case at issue, three Latvian citizens manipulated the procurement process by pre-coordinating prices so that they were able to receive subsidies from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The accused pleaded guilty; two were sentenced to 2.5 years of imprisonment and a fine of €2500, the other has to pay a fine of €2500. It is the first conviction in Latvia after the operational start of the EPPO in 2021.
- 25 May/8 April 2022: The Munich I Regional Court (*Landgericht München I*) concludes criminal proceedings against gang members having committed a major VAT carousel fraud. The criminal organisation repeatedly let circulate platinum coins through the same companies. As some of these companies did not fulfil their tax obligations, their criminal activities led to an estimated tax loss in Germany of at least €23 million. Criminal activities were also carried out in Czechia, Slovakia and Romania. On 8 April 2022, [the Munich court handed down the first judgment in the case](#) sentencing a suspect to three years of imprisonment; €170,000 were confiscated. [On 25 Mai 2022, two other suspects were sentenced](#). The head of the criminal organisation was sentence to six years and nine months of imprisonment and the confiscation of over €10 million was ordered. The other accused

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was sentenced to four years and three months of imprisonment. In her case, another amount of more than €10 million has been ordered to be confiscated.

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