

EPPO and OLAF Investigate Alleged Fraud Linked to EU Diplomatic Academy



News

Cornelia Riehle

At the beginning of December 2025, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Brussels conducted searches in several buildings of the College of Europe in Bruges, at the European External Action Service in Brussels, and at the homes of three suspects in connection with alleged fraud relating to EU-funded training for junior diplomats. The investigative measures were carried out with the support of OLAF.

The investigation concerns the European Union Diplomatic Academy, a nine-month training programme for junior diplomats from the Member States. It was awarded to the College of Europe in Belgium for the period 2021–2022 by the European External Action Service (EEAS) following a tender procedure. The investigation's focus is on whether the College of Europe and/or their representatives were informed in advance about the selection criteria for the tender procedure and had sufficient reason to believe that they would be awarded the implementation of the project prior to official publication of the tender notice by the EEAS.

Before the searches took place, the EPPO requested that the immunity of several suspects be lifted, which was granted. The rector and a senior staff member of the College of Europe as well as a senior official of the European Commission were detained. The accusations concerned procurement fraud and corruption, conflict of interest, and breach of professional secrecy.

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