

# EPPO – Implementation Phase Started



**Thomas Wahl**

## News

At their [informal meeting in Sofia on 26 January 2018](#), the Ministers for Justice discussed the next steps in successful implementation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). After having finalised the legal framework in October 2017 (see [eucrim 3/2017](#), pp. 102-104), it is now up to the European institutions to establish the effective functioning of the new European body that will investigate, prosecute, and bring to justice criminal offences against the EU's financial interests.

The Commission briefed the ministers on the steps planned as regards the establishment and initial administrative management of the office. *Věra Jourová*, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, stressed that the EPPO will be "a game changer" in the way it will fight VAT fraud, fraud against EU funds, and corruption (see also [eucrim 3/2017 editorial](#), p. 93). A very important part of the build-up phase is the recruitment of key staff for the EPPO, in particular the European Chief Prosecutor. *Ms Jourová* reiterated the Commission's intention to have the EPPO up and running by the end of 2020.

In their debate, the ministers focused on the relationship between the EPPO and other European Union bodies and institutions, in particular Eurojust, OLAF, and Europol. They stressed that the establishment of the EPPO should not intervene in their administrative and functional integrity. The ministers emphasised the need to draft detailed and clear rules for cooperation with partner organisations in order to improve cooperation and avoid duplication of investigative action.

During the meeting, the Netherlands announced that it is considering joining the EPPO in the future (see also [eucrim 4/2017](#), p. 165). It would then be the 21st EU Member State to support the new body, which was established by a group of 20 EU Member States as an enhanced cooperation measure.

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