

# OLAF and Eurojust Help Dismantle Mafia-Like Gang

Thomas Wahl



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

## News

With the support of OLAF and Eurojust, the Italian Carabinieri managed a [successful strike against an organised criminal gang](#) that had established a sophisticated fraud scheme at the expense of EU funds. OLAF was able to prove that the group had committed fraud against EU agricultural funds, ostensibly for rural development worth some €9.5 million. The criminal group had purchased machinery with the support of EU funds at an inflated price. Although the machinery was declared as new, it was in fact either second-hand or had been purchased at a much lower price than officially declared. In addition, the fraudsters laundered their money, e.g., through fictitious sales of food products. The Italian law enforcement authorities found that the group was additionally involved in other criminal offences, including extortion, intimidation, kidnapping, and illegal detention of firearms and explosives. The operation dubbed “Grande Carro” (Italian for “Big Dipper”) covered seven EU Member States (Italy, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Romania). It is estimated that the entire criminal scheme was worth over €16 million. 48 persons were arrested during the operation that took place at the end of October 2020.

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ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>

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The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



Co-funded by  
the European Union