

OLAF Annual Report 2022



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News

In 2022, OLAF defended over €600 million against fraud and other irregularities harming the EU budget. In addition, OLAF's work in 2022 was marked by providing a risk framework for the Recovery and Resilience Facility, offering assistance to Ukraine authorities to ensure protection of EU funding following Russian's aggression in Ukraine, and addressing the "Qatargate" scandal that rocked the European Parliament. OLAF presented the key achievements of its work in its [annual report for 2022](#), which was presented on 6 June 2023. For the first time, the report was made available in an [interactive virtual format](#). The key figures regarding OLAF's investigative performance in 2022 are as follows (for activity reports of previous years, → [euclid 2/2022, 94](#) and [euclid 2/2021, 80-81](#) with further references):

- OLAF concluded 256 investigations and issued 275 recommendations to the relevant national and EU authorities;
- OLAF recommended the recovery of nearly €427 million to the EU budget, and prevented the undue spending of nearly €198 million;
- OLAF opened 192 new investigations, after having carried out 1,017 preliminary analyses;
- OLAF reported 71 cases with possible criminal offences to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO);
- OLAF closed 38 investigations into fraudulent or irregular behaviour by staff and members of the EU's institutions.

The report confirms trends that have been observed over previous years: OLAF's investigations mostly dealt with collusion, manipulation of procurement procedures, conflicts of interests, inflated invoices, evasion of customs duties, smuggling and counterfeiting. There is an increase in fraud taking place digitally and affecting multiple jurisdictions. This has posed new challenges for OLAF, i.e., the access to and processing of data becomes more and more relevant as does the work over boundaries in order to get a complete picture of the fraudulent activities.

As in previous years, the report highlights several cases which demonstrate the broad scope of OLAF's mission, including fraud in an archeological site, subsidy fraud, breach of fellowship obligations, breach of procurement rules by a public administration, and fictitious employment. In addition, the report provides information on joint customs operations and examples of successful cooperation between OLAF and its partners (authorities in EU Member States and third countries).

When presenting the report, OLAF Director-General *Ville Itälä* said that OLAF protects both the EU budget and EU citizens. He emphasised that OLAF ensured that the EU taxpayers' money has been available for infrastructure and digitalisation and that EU citizens have been protected from adulterated honey, counterfeit cigarettes or dangerous alcoholic drinks. 531 million illicitly traded cigarettes and 14.7 million litres of illicit wine, beer and spirits were seized with the support of OLAF in 2022.

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