

OLAF Discovers Fraud in Bulgarian Ministry and Signs Cooperation Arrangement with Bulgarian Prosecutor



News

Thomas Wahl

On 1 February 2021, OLAF informed the public that it closed investigations into [fraud and misappropriation of EU funds detected within the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior](#). In the case at issue, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior received money from the EU Internal Security Fund in order to purchase all-terrain vehicles for the police. Investigations revealed that the Ministry unilaterally changed the conditions of the grant agreement and manipulated tenders, as a result of which it bought sport utility vehicles (SUVs) from older stocks with the EU money. OLAF recommends the competent European Commission service to recover almost €6 million from the beneficiary. The Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office is recommended to open a criminal investigation for abuse of power to the benefit of a third party.

The information on this case comes close after OLAF signed an [administrative cooperation agreement with the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria](#) in January 2021. The agreement will allow for a more effective and targeted exchange of information between OLAF and the Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office (while respecting the relevant rules on confidentiality and data protection), as well as for operational assistance and training. It also includes a provision on OLAF reports as a judicial follow-up of investigated cases. However, the arrangement does neither affect mutual legal assistance or other forms of judicial cooperation in criminal matters nor future cooperation between the Bulgarian prosecutors and the EPPO.

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