

# OLAF-EPPO Operational Cooperation January-July 2025

Thomas Wahl

## News

This news item summarises cases in which the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) reported on their cooperation. It covers the first seven months of 2025. The overview (in chronological order) aims at giving an impression on how OLAF complements EPPO's investigations and on how the two bodies collaborate to protect the EU's financial interests. OLAF's core mission is to carry out independently administrative investigations into fraud, corruption, and other irregularities involving EU funds, so as to ensure that all EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can create jobs and growth in Europe. The EPPO is the independent public prosecution office of the EU, responsible for investigating, prosecuting and bringing to judgment crimes against the financial interests of the EU. According to Art. 101(1) of the EPPO Regulation, "the EPPO shall establish and maintain a close relationship with OLAF based on mutual cooperation within their respective mandates and on information exchange. The relationship shall aim in particular to ensure that all available means are used to protect the Union's financial interests through the complementarity and support by OLAF to the EPPO." A working arrangement signed in 2021, details the modalities of this relationship (→[eucri](#)m 2/2021,80). The following eucri

overview provides several practical examples that implement the working arrangement. OLAF's operational work outside this cooperation is summarised in a separate news item (→[related link](#)).

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- 29 January 2025: OLAF reports on the results of investigations into the [misuse of EU funds for development projects in the Danube Delta](#), Romania. OLAF complemented investigations by the EPPO. Both bodies closely cooperated and detected a significant misuse of funds in over 30 EU-financed projects. In one case, nearly €600,000 were unlawfully acquired from an EU-funded tender. The EPPO in [Bucharest filed an indictment](#) against one individual and one company in this case, while OLAF recommended that the European Commission recover the sum paid in error.
- 11 February 2025: Investigations by the EPPO and OLAF lead to the [arrest of a ringleader](#) who managed a mafia-type criminal group that systematically committed subsidy fraud. Investigations by OLAF [revealed](#) that companies of the criminal group, established in Romania and Italy, secured contracts for drinking water distribution and sewage rehabilitation projects worth over €100 million, which were co-financed by the European Cohesion Fund. However, the companies presented false documents and false contracts during the tender and cheated about their financial capacity. Works and services were partly never carried out, some EU money ended up with associates. For the investigations already finalised, OLAF recommended that the European Commission recover €20 million, representing the total amount paid from the Cohesion Fund for the suspected fraudulent contracts.
- 10 April 2025: An EPPO investigation, largely supported by OLAF, leads to [six individuals and six companies being indicted for fraud and money laundering](#) before the Bucharest criminal court, Romania.

Investigations revealed that an organised crime group operating in Romania, Cyprus, Czechia, and the United Arab Emirates allegedly [illegally obtained approximately €9.5 million from the European Regional and Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) for the development of IT projects. By a sophisticated system of companies and contractors, false documents and fictitious contracts were submitted to the managing authority in Romania. OLAF particularly carried out analysis of seized IT servers and uncovered the *modus operandi* of the gang.

- 25 June 2025: OLAF and Europol support the [EPP-led investigation "Calypso"](#). The investigation targets a Chinese criminal network which smuggled Chinese goods into the EU, e.g. textiles, footwear, e-scooters, and e-bikes. The estimated loss in customs duties and VAT is €700 million. A coordinated raid in Bulgaria, Greece, France and Spain results in the arrest of 10 suspects and over 100 searches at several premises, including at offices of customs brokers, companies controlled by the organised criminal groups, and at offices of tax advisers, lawyers, accountants and transport companies. €5.8 million in different currencies, over 7,100 e-bikes and nearly 3,700 e-scooters were seized as well as 480 containers for further checks and verification in the Port of Piraeus, Greece. [OLAF provided, inter alia](#), crucial evidence on trade flows, sales activities, distribution chains, and warehouse locations. The EPP is further investigating the *modus operandi* of the group and will bring the committed crimes to court.
- 17 July 2025: Following OLAF investigations which were launched in 2020, the EPP in Bratislava (Slovakia) [indicts](#) one individual and one company for fraud involving the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The investigations found that the beneficiary of [EU funds supporting the construction and operation of a go-cart centre in Slovakia](#) breached the grant agreement by creating artificial conditions both during the application and implementation phases of the project. A sum of nearly €200,000 could be recovered, as recommended by OLAF. The EPP indicated that the accused individual could face a prison sentence of up to six years and a fine of up to €331,930 and the company could face a ban to receive aid and support provided from EU funds of up to ten years and a fine of up to €1.6 million.

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