

OLAF Operational Work: June-September 2023



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European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

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News

This news item summarises OLAF's operational work from June to September 2023 in chronological order. It follows the overview in [eucri](#)m 1/2023, 16-17.

- 15 June 2023: OLAF informs of the results of [operation LUDUS III](#), which was led by Europol and targeted fake and illicit toys that were to be sold in the European Union. In the period between October 2022 and February 2023, authorities in 20 Member States carried out over 6000 inspections and seized 19 million toys with a value of around €79 million. [OLAF supported operations](#) by coordinating targeted enforcement actions and carrying out data analysis. In addition, OLAF assisted two raids of wholesale shops in Poland.
- 17 July 2023: Following on-the-spot checks by OLAF investigators and Greek law enforcement authorities, [over 15 tonnes of illicit refrigerant gases are seized](#). OLAF provided intelligence on the suspicious economic operators that were checked, helped coordinate activities, and ensured cooperation with the industry operators affected by the imitated gases. Illicit trade in refrigerant gases, the use of which is restricted in the EU, is a repeating issue in OLAF's work. In March 2023, the Office [obtained the Montreal Protocol Award](#) for Customs and Enforcement Officers for its work in this domain.
- 24 July 2023: With the support of OLAF, [Romanian law enforcement authorities stop 353 litres of insecticide](#) valued at around €100,000 in the Tulcea County (Romania). Two persons suspected of trafficking in toxic products and violations of trademark regulations are arrested. OLAF provided intelligence and coordinated the activities of the Romanian authorities.
- 23 August 2023: Together with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Bulgaria, OLAF has conducted investigations into possible [irregularities in an EU-funded project for the modernisation of local railway infrastructure in Bulgaria](#). While the EPPO focuses on possible criminal offences, such as the misuse of EU funds, OLAF investigated the financial damage caused by the alleged irregularities, notably during the procurement procedure and project implementation. It was found that project partners either lacked the technical capacities to implement the project or had misrepresented their financial capacities. OLAF addressed a recommendation to CINEA (the European Climate, Environment and Infrastructure Executive Agency) to recover over €38 million. The EPPO's criminal investigations are ongoing.
- 19 September 2023: On the basis of an OLAF recommendation, the [Debrecen District Public Prosecution Service \(Hungary\) indicts two trustees](#) of two Hungarian foundations for having falsely accounted the use of budget funds. OLAF investigations in irregularities found that the two foundations have not properly used EU and national funds that were allocated for the organisation of leisure/recreational programmes in Hungarian municipalities.

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