

OLAF Report 2018



Christine Götz

News

On 3 September 2019, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) released its [annual report for 2018](#). The key figures for 2018 are:

- OLAF concluded 167 investigations;
- OLAF issued 256 recommendations to the relevant national and EU authorities;
- As a result of the investigations concluded in 2018, OLAF recommended the recovery of €371 million to the EU budget;
- 219 new investigations were opened in 2018.

The report also analyses a number of trends revealed by OLAF's anti-fraud investigations. According to the report, setting up fake companies and disguising falsified business transactions is a very common method used by fraudsters in order to obtain EU funds. Moreover, fraud in the promotion of agricultural products (often in combination with money laundering through third countries) and evasion of customs duties were often investigated by OLAF. OLAF was successful in solving complex, transnational, and intricate cases. This helped not only to stop (organised) criminals from defrauding the EU budget, but also protected the health and well-being of European citizens, as emphasized by OLAF Director-General *Ville Itälä*.

This year's report includes a focus chapter that explains how OLAF cracks down on organized criminals, e.g. fraud in the promotion of agricultural products, organised crime in IT projects, VAT fraud with high-value electronics, etc. The report highlights that OLAF investigators have the necessary experience to quickly identify patterns of fraud and detect new areas of fraud. This is especially the case in cross-border situations in which suspicious behaviour cannot be detected by national authorities alone.

In addition to its investigative work, OLAF also regularly plays a substantial role in the negotiation of legislative instruments on the protection of the EU's financial interests against fraud and corruption. In 2018, OLAF was involved in the development of a new Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy that aims to reinforce OLAF's analytical capacity, the cooperation between OLAF and Commission services, and the Commission's corporate oversight in anti-fraud matters (see [euclid 1/2019](#), p. 15). As a new task, OLAF will coordinate and monitor the implementation of anti-fraud strategies. OLAF also worked on supporting the entry into force of a new global anti-smuggling treaty, the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, and on a new Commission Action Plan to fight the illicit tobacco trade.

From a legal perspective, a major event in 2018 was the Commission's proposal to amend the Regulation concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office in order to enable OLAF to complement the work of the new European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and to ensure a close and effective cooperation (cf. [euclid 1/2018](#), p. 5f.).

AUTHOR

Christine Götz

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and “criministrative” law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

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**