

OLAF Unveils Humanitarian Aid Fraud in Mauretania



Thomas Wahl

News

In January 2020, OLAF [concluded investigations](#) against a Dutch company which revealed a fraud scheme against EU money for development and humanitarian aid as well as corruption. A Dutch company had won a large EU-funded contract managed by the Mauritanian authorities for the removal of 57 shipwrecks from a bay in Mauritania. OLAF and the Dutch authorities found that public procurement procedures had been breached, subcontract rules violated, and two Mauritanian officials bribed.

According to OLAF Director-General *Ville Itälä*, the case showed that OLAF also ensures the protection of EU money in non-EU countries, that OLAF fights for EU assistance to be received by those who need it, and that OLAF investigations know no borders. Detection of the fraud scheme was possible through on-the-spot checks, witness interviews, and analyses of large amounts of technical data. As a result of the investigations, OLAF recommended the recovery of over €3 million and the prosecution of the fraudsters. In addition, OLAF recommended flagging the Dutch company in the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES), which would exclude the company from possible access to European taxpayers' money.

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