

Workshop on the Network of Associations for European Criminal Law and for the Protection of the Financial Interests of the EU

Summary of the meeting, 16 September 2019, Brussels



Report

On 16 September 2019, OLAF organised a one-day workshop to discuss the future of the Network of Associations for European Criminal Law and for the Protection of the Financial Interests of the EU. The workshop took place in Brussels and was attended by 25 practitioners and academics from all over Europe.

The purpose of the workshop was also to encourage the establishment of new associations or for existing associations to join the Network. As a result, the Network was already able to welcome new members, but institutions and associations that might be interested in joining the Network are warmly encouraged to get in contact (info@euclid.eu).

In her opening speech, OLAF Policy Director *Margarete Hofmann* recalled that the Network, which started with the creation of the first association in Rome in October 1990, will turn 30 next year. Over that period, the protection of the financial interests of the Union had seen an enormous evolution, which culminated in the adoption of the Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (the PIF Directive) and the Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in 2017. She underlined that the Network has contributed to this success in no small measure, citing the *Corpus Iuris* studies that laid the theoretical foundation for the EPPO. The Honorary President and founder of the Network, *Francesco de Angelis*, provided an overview of the origins and achievements of the Network and made a passionate plea for turning the PIF Directive into a regulation in order to strengthen its uniform application. He also thought that the time is ripe for a more comprehensive codification of European criminal law, both substantive and procedural.

Following this introduction, the workshop was split into four sessions on 'Membership and structure of the Network'; 'Work and priorities' (moderated by Professor *John Vervaele*, Utrecht); 'Annual Meetings and Conferences' (Professor *Rosaria Sicurella*, Catania); and the use of the *euclid* journal and website (*Thomas Wahl*, MPI Freiburg).

It was agreed to renew efforts to reactivate associations that had become less involved in recent years, as well as to find new members. There was also agreement to identify new topics and strategic projects in which a significant number of network members could get involved, and some suggestions for such topics were made. Finally, it was felt that more importance should be attributed to the annual meetings of the presidents of the associations, by extending their duration and strategic focus. OLAF would organise the annual meeting of the presidents of the associations in 2020 under the new format.

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