

OLAF/14/1  
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## **OLAF in 2013: higher volume of investigative work, shorter duration of investigations, more results for EU taxpayers**

**In 2013, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) succeeded in stepping up the fight against fraud across Europe. Citizens and institutions reported more information of potential investigative interest than ever before. OLAF completed a record number of investigations while reducing their overall duration and it issued the highest number of recommendations in five years. OLAF recommended the recovery of €402.8 million to the EU budget, which will help fund other projects and ease the burden on EU taxpayers. These excellent results show that OLAF has become an increasingly efficient office, constantly delivering for European citizens.**

*"In 2013 we succeeded in modernising OLAF and in making it an increasingly proficient Office in the fight against fraud and corruption in the EU. The reorganisation of 2012 has yielded promising results and has allowed us to step up our investigative efforts, to contribute to key legislative files and to further deepen the cooperation with our operational partners. This has been done with virtually the same resources as in previous years which speaks for the commitment and professionalism of our staff",* said Director-General Giovanni Kessler at the annual press conference presenting the OLAF Report 2013.

Speaking of the outlook for 2014, he added: *"OLAF has been strengthened by the entry into force of a new OLAF Regulation and by the adoption of new Guidelines on Investigation Procedures for OLAF staff. We look forward to pursuing our good investigative work and to driving anti-fraud policy further. We will continue to actively support the Commission's plans to establish a European Public Prosecutor's Office. This project is a key part of our vision for a better protection of the EU's financial interests."*

### **Highlights of OLAF results in 2013**

- OLAF received the highest number of incoming information of potential investigative interest since its creation, 1294 items. This means that in 2013 the Office received 35% more information than five years ago in 2009, reflecting the continued attention of EU citizens, institutions and other partners on fraud issues. This higher flow of incoming information shows increased confidence in OLAF's investigative capacities.
- Despite the higher volume of incoming information, OLAF succeeded in continuing to assess this information in a short time - 1.8 months on average - before

deciding whether to pursue a case or not. Over the last two years, OLAF reduced the duration of this selection phase by over 70%.

- OLAF opened a high number of investigations, 253. This marks an increase of over 58% compared with 2009.
- 293 investigations were also completed in 2013. The average duration of an investigation decreased to 21.8 months. This is the shortest average duration of investigations over the last five years. By conducting investigations more efficiently and in a shorter time, the chance for OLAF cases to lead to tangible results on the ground is increased.
- OLAF issued 353 recommendations for financial, judicial, administrative or disciplinary action to be taken by the competent authorities. This is 81% more compared to 2009.
- In 2013, OLAF also recommended a high amount of recoveries to the EU budget, €402.8 million.

### **OLAF contribution to key anti-fraud policies**

In 2013, OLAF assisted the European Commission with the development of anti-fraud policies and legislation. The Office contributed substantial technical input for the Commission's legislative proposal on the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) of July. This initiative will help ensure that fraud against the EU budget is consistently prosecuted across Europe and that fraudsters are brought to justice.

As the illicit trade in tobacco products deprives the EU and the Member States budgets of considerable resources each year, OLAF continued to make the fight against this harmful phenomenon a priority throughout the year.

Because complex fraud cases of a cross-border or international dimension are increasingly frequent, in 2013 OLAF has broadened its outreach. The Office entered into a series of cooperation agreements with partners in Europe and beyond. Such partnerships will contribute to a better protection of the EU financial interests, to the benefit of EU taxpayers.

To read the full report, please [click](#) here (in English only)

### **OLAF**

The mission of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) is threefold: it protects the financial interests of the European Union by investigating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities; it detects and investigates serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties by members and staff of the EU institutions and bodies that could result in disciplinary or criminal proceedings; and it supports the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, in the development and implementation of anti-fraud legislation and policies.

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