

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by e-mail

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls), at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en
Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU Publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

The Fraud Notification System (FNS) is a web-based tool available to any person who seeks to pass on information concerning potential corruption and fraud.

http://ec.europa.eu/anti-fraud/olaf-and-you/report-fraud_en

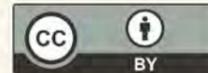


Printed by the Publications Office of the European Union in Luxembourg

This document should not be considered as representative of the European Commission's official position.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

© European Union, 2025



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

Cover: © European Union, 2025

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.

Print :

ISBN 978-92-68-23760-1
ISSN 1977-4834
DOI:10.2784/2562232
OB-01-25-000-EN-C

PDF :

ISBN 978-92-68-23759-5
ISSN 2315-2494
DOI: 10.2784/0067317
OB-01-25-000-EN-N

Foreword	4
Main trends	6
Investigative activity	8
Protecting EU funds	10
Protecting EU revenue	12
Investigating within the EU institutions	18
Impact of OLAF investigations	20
Financial impact	20
Disciplinary impact	21
Judicial impact	22
Administrative impact	23
Anti-fraud Policies	25
Cooperation with partners	26

Disclaimer

OLAF's report features case studies for illustrative purposes only. The fact that OLAF presents these case studies does not prejudice the outcome of any judicial proceedings, nor does it imply that any particular individuals are guilty of any wrongdoing.

Foreword

With immense pride, I present the annual report of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) for the period of 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

2024 was testament to OLAF's unwavering commitment and impactful work, culminating in the conclusion of 246 investigations, the initiation of 230 new ones, and the recommendation for the recovery of over €870 million to the EU budget. We also thwarted the potential loss of €43.5 million in EU funds to fraud.

This report vividly captures OLAF's robust activities to defend the EU's financial interests. We dismantled a major corruption network in Hungary that compromised 112 EU funded projects, exposed overpriced generators intended for Ukraine, and facilitated the seizure of hundreds of thousands of counterfeit goods tied to major sporting events.

The report looks at our efforts in 2024 against commercial fraud, such as evasion of import duties and VAT, that had an estimated impact of €623 million, either through recommended recoveries or prevented losses. It also highlights how we helped our partners combat cigarettes and tobacco smuggling resulting in the seizure of over 128 million illicit cigarettes, 310 tons of raw tobacco and 75 tons of water pipe tobacco, preventing losses of some €96 million to the EU and national budgets.

On a personal note, this document holds special significance as it marks the conclusion of my 7-year tenure as OLAF's Director-General. As my seventh and final annual report, it offers a moment for reflection on the pivotal developments of the past seven years and insights for safeguarding our Union's budget in the future.

I am deeply honoured to have led the only EU Office empowered to recover misused funds and prevent potential financial missteps. Over the past seven years, having closed 1588 investigations, OLAF recommended to recover more than €4 billion of EU funds and to prevent the undue spending of more than €810 million.

I take great pride in OLAF's role as an enabler of 'more Europe' by ensuring the correct spending of taxpayers' money and helping create a level playing field for companies and individuals rooted in the rule of law.

I take immense satisfaction that our investigations also contributed to protecting citizens' health and safety, safeguarded the environment, and helped preserve the image and the reputation of the EU institutions.



During my mandate, the Union strengthened its defence against fund mismanagement, notably with the contributions of our partners at the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), showcasing incredible figures. New promising ventures lie ahead, such as the establishment of the Union's Anti-Money Laundering Authority and a future Customs Agency at the Union level.

In 2018, I embarked on a mission to enhance cooperation across the budgetary control landscape. Today, I am delighted that OLAF's partnerships with the European Court of Auditors, EUROJUST, EUROPOL, and the EPPO have never been more effective, enabling seamless collaboration both within the EU and globally. This report spotlights numerous examples of these achievements.

Today, OLAF boasts liaison staff, maintains a presence in Luxembourg, and conducts joint training initiatives with anti-fraud partners. In an increasingly digital world, we are continuously improving interoperability and data sharing.

In exactly this spirit of cooperation in challenging times, President von der Leyen mandated Budget, Anti-fraud, and Administration Commissioner Serafin to initiate a review of the European anti-fraud architecture. This review process has been launched at a timely juncture, as the Commission is due to present its proposal for a new multi-annual financial framework.

I am proud to say that during my tenure OLAF built up capacity and competences that will allow it to be major player in the new anti-fraud architecture, ready to face the challenges presented by an enhanced cooperation with partners as well as the responsibilities linked with new advanced technology, interoperability and data analytics.

In the last part of my mandate Europe has witnessed two monumental disruptions to our way of life and business and I can proudly say that OLAF adapted very quickly. In 2021, we found ourselves in the business of saving lives when we tracked down fake facemasks and prevented EU governments from signing fake contracts for COVID vaccines avoiding losses of around €16.5 billion. Subsequently, the fallout shaped the current EU budget, including the €800 billion loan-financed Next Generation EU fund for recovery and resilience.

More recently, further compounded by the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Union faced an unmatched emergency situation. This crisis prompted a strategic reorientation of EU support towards Ukraine and the establishment of a comprehensive sanctions regime against Russia and Belarus. Working closely with European and international partners, OLAF has adapted to fortify Ukraine's anti-fraud efforts and enforce sanctions.

These unprecedented challenges will certainly influence the design of the next multi-annual financial framework, propelling Europe's competitiveness and preparedness. OLAF stands poised and motivated to ensure that a new, ambitious EU budget is rigorously and effectively protected in the context of a new anti-fraud architecture. I am proud that OLAF enjoys excellent relations with its Supervisory Committee and that the Controller of Procedural Guarantees confirmed OLAF's works in all her assessments closed in 2024.

As I prepare to pass the torch, it will be my successor's task, alongside our partners, to tackle an increasingly complex and sophisticated fraud landscape. A fundamental requirement for their success will be ensuring that OLAF retains a critical level of resources, as during my

tenure we have delivered excellent results despite a reduction of 35 posts, almost 10% of our entire workforce.

Last year, our investigative efforts resulted in the recovery or prevention of spending approximately €600 million. When juxtaposed with the annual operational cost of OLAF, which stands at €67 million, it is evident that for every euro invested in OLAF, we reap a return of roughly 9 euros. This impressive ratio reconfirms a strong return on investment of our operations.

In 2024, we celebrated OLAF's 25th anniversary. From our origins in a Union of 15 Member States communicating by fax, we have evolved and adapted, always recognising our purpose: to ensure fairness and protect EU citizens, businesses, and communities. The closer we collaborate, the better outcomes we achieve, more effectively safeguarding taxpayers' money and deterring potential fraudsters.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my exceptional team at OLAF, our partners, and allies across numerous organisations. You are the driving force ensuring OLAF remains central to the EU anti-fraud architecture, championing fairness, safeguarding EU financial interests, and shielding citizens.

Ville Itälä

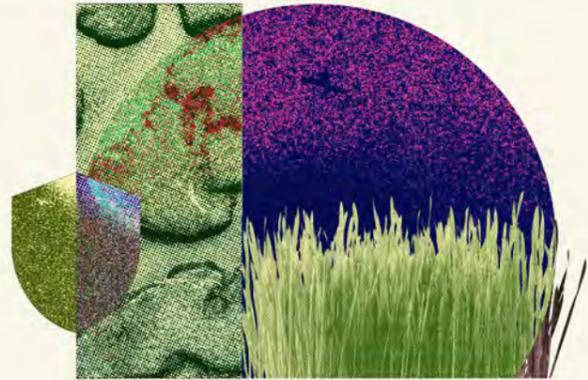
Director-General of OLAF

Main trends

On expenditure, in 2024, OLAF investigated conflict of interests, procurement irregularities, inflation of costs, harassment, violation and manipulation of public procurement rules, instances of collusion, inflated invoices and creation of false documents. What is important to note about these trends is that each one represents an attack on the EU, its society, its competitiveness, its reputation and the positive impact it can make in the world. It is OLAF's job to chase down this wrongdoing.

In December 2024, a new College of Commissioners was appointed for five years. The new Commission has set ambitious priorities such as promoting prosperity and competitiveness; ensuring defence and security; protecting food and the environment; upholding democracy and society; building global bridges as well as ensuring adequate resources for the challenges ahead.

For 25 years, OLAF has worked hard to protect EU budgets and uphold Commission priorities and 2024 was no exception.

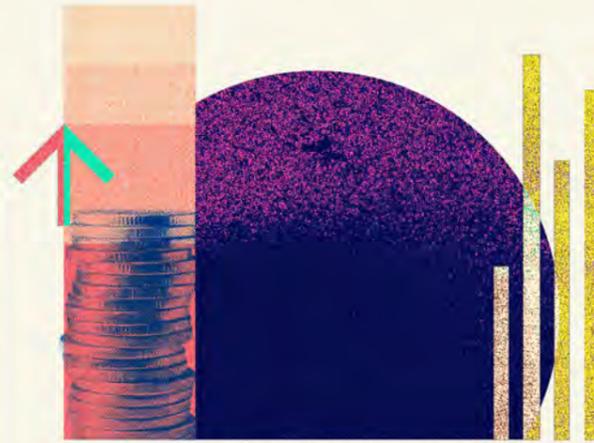


Sustaining our quality of life: Food security, water and nature

OLAF uncovered illegal schemes that undermined EU law aimed at protecting biodiversity and the environment. In one instance our investigators exposed a scam that saw over 650 tons of mis-declared plastic waste illegally exported from the EU, that was to be dumped in non-EU countries.

We continued our award-winning work on stemming the tide of environmentally damaging refrigerant gases smuggled into the EU. These potent greenhouse gases can significantly impact climate change. As such, the EU has phased out their use. An illicit and lucrative trade by those attempting to circumvent these rules has sprung up and OLAF has been in the forefront of tackling this trend.

2024 was no exception and we led a Joint Customs Operation with authorities of 16 Member States together with Türkiye and Ukraine, resulting in the interception of thousands of cylinders of the gas worth **€4.5 million**, containing the equivalent of more than **400 000 tons of CO2** that had the potential to cause grave damage to the environment.



A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Our work in preventing counterfeit goods flooding the EU protects citizens and society whilst ensuring a level playing field for genuine EU producers that promotes EU competitiveness.

One example of this was when we worked with authorities in Spain and Italy to seize over 900 000 counterfeit razorblades across the EU. The goods in question were packaged as a very well-known brand of razorblades and were sold in retail stores across the EU. These fakes did not meet EU safety standards thus endangering citizens. As with all counterfeiting, this scheme was an attack on legitimate manufacturers of the genuine brands.

Another trend that continued to hamper EU competitiveness in 2024 was e-commerce fraud. Since the COVID pandemic, the EU's digital economy has grown drastically with e-commerce the driving factor.

Business-to-Business-to-Consumer (B2B2C) e-commerce plays a critical role in the EU's digital economy. Goods are imported to the EU in containers destined for warehouses and fulfilment centres from which they are dispatched to consumers through online platforms.

We identified emerging fraud in this area including non-declaration of goods to customs, misclassification of products and unlawful release of goods from transit procedures. Goods were imported into the EU that evaded import duties and VAT and were not subject to the relevant EU regulatory, safety, and quality standards. Not only does this damage the EU budget, risks harm to consumers' health and safety but creates an unfair competitive advantage over law-abiding traders and producers.

One example saw us identify an e-bike import fraud that cost **€120 million in missed import duties** and **€80 million in VAT**. Our expertise in analysing trade flows and monitoring online platforms allowed us to alert EU customs authorities and to identify implicated warehouses. Coordinated inspections then led to the seizure of some of the illegally imported goods.



Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Our internal investigations are very important to ensure the highest ethical standards in the EU's Institutions, Bodies and Agencies.

Last year our investigators tackled complex and sensitive cases, involving staff in management positions or with a high profile in their workplace. A significant number of these cases centred on allegations of harassment, external professional activities including conflict of interests and ethical issues linked to recruitment.

Such instances are detrimental to the EU and weaken citizens' trust in its institutions. By holding up a mirror to the EU, OLAF seeks to place the highest priority on creating greater transparency and ethical standards as well as fostering greater confidence and reliability towards taxpayers and Member States alike.



Global Europe

OLAF has a global mandate and can investigate misuse of EU funds anywhere in the world. Often EU funds are destined to help non-EU countries develop key infrastructure, promote educational and agricultural development.

Last year, we investigated instances of procurement irregularities and inflated invoices in EU funded projects across the world, including Sierra Leone, Moldova and Sri Lanka.

Another way that OLAF acts on the global stage is by our international agreements we sign with anti-fraud actors. The agreements are known as administrative cooperation arrangements.

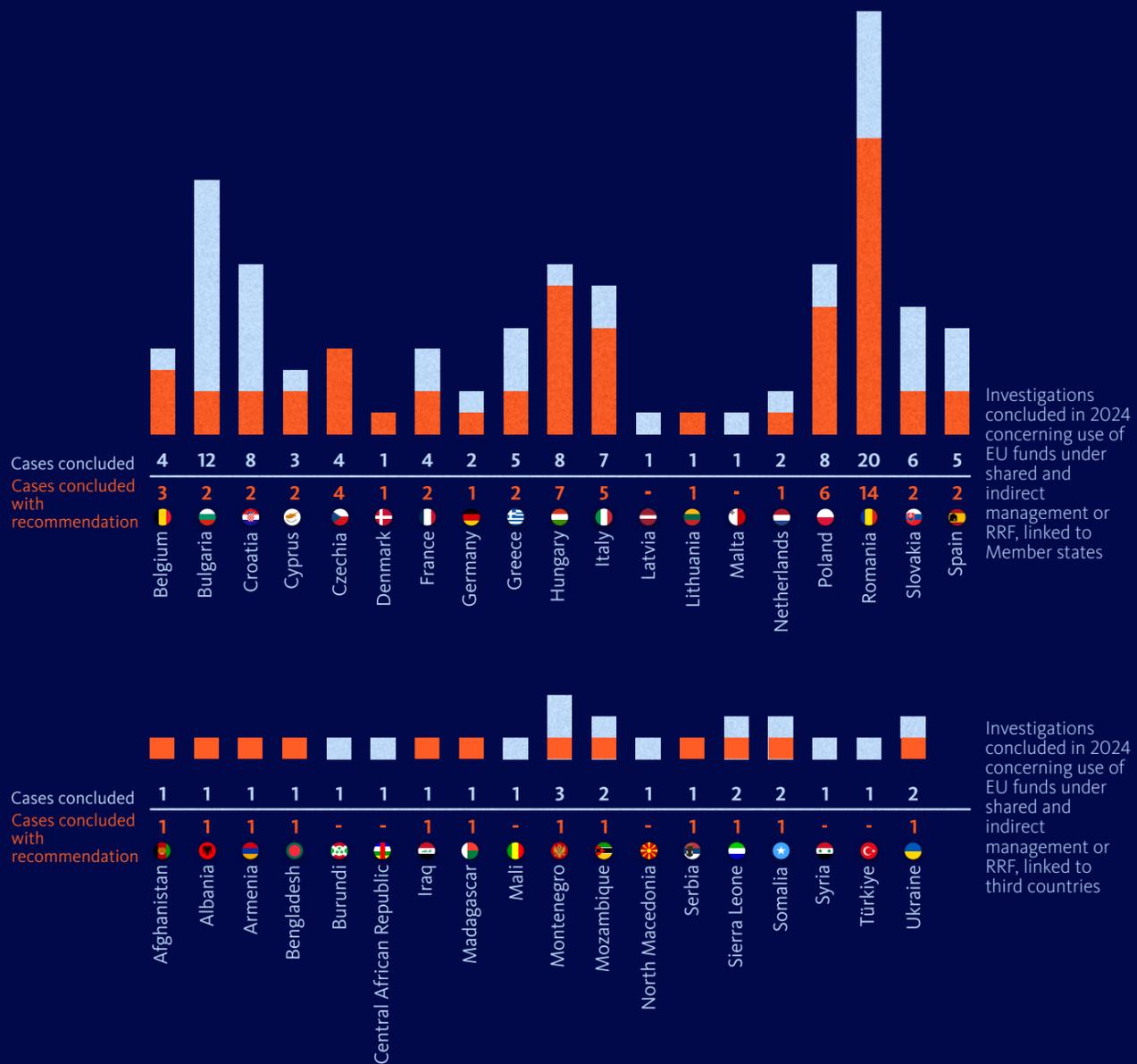
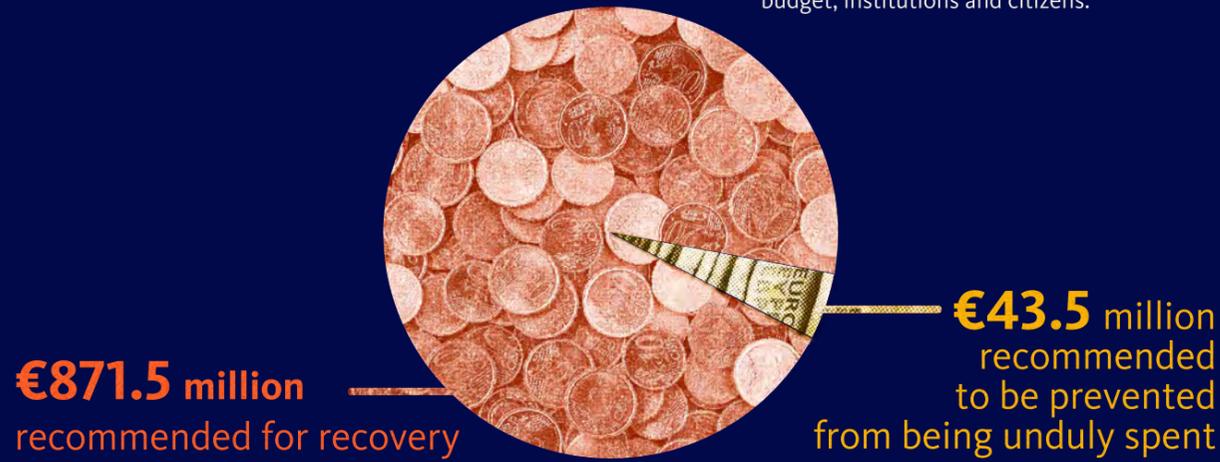
In 2024, we expanded this network by signing arrangements with the Foreign Service Control Unit of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Building these international bridges allows us to have a better overview on how EU funds are spent and to ensure a greater protection of the EU's financial interests, allowing a global Europe to leverage our power and our partnerships.

Another example of OLAF's global presence in 2024 can be seen in our work in Ukraine. Against the backdrop of the continued war against Ukraine by Russia, OLAF helped police EU sanctions against Russia and its ally Belarus. In one operation, we assisted Spanish authorities in foiling the illicit export of chemical substances to Russia that could have been used in the production of weapons.

Investigative activity

OLAF had a strong investigative performance in 2024, which saw analysts and investigators work across the EU and beyond to help detect and prevent fraud and protect the EU budget, institutions and citizens.



246
Cases concluded



230
Investigations opened

1138
Selections made



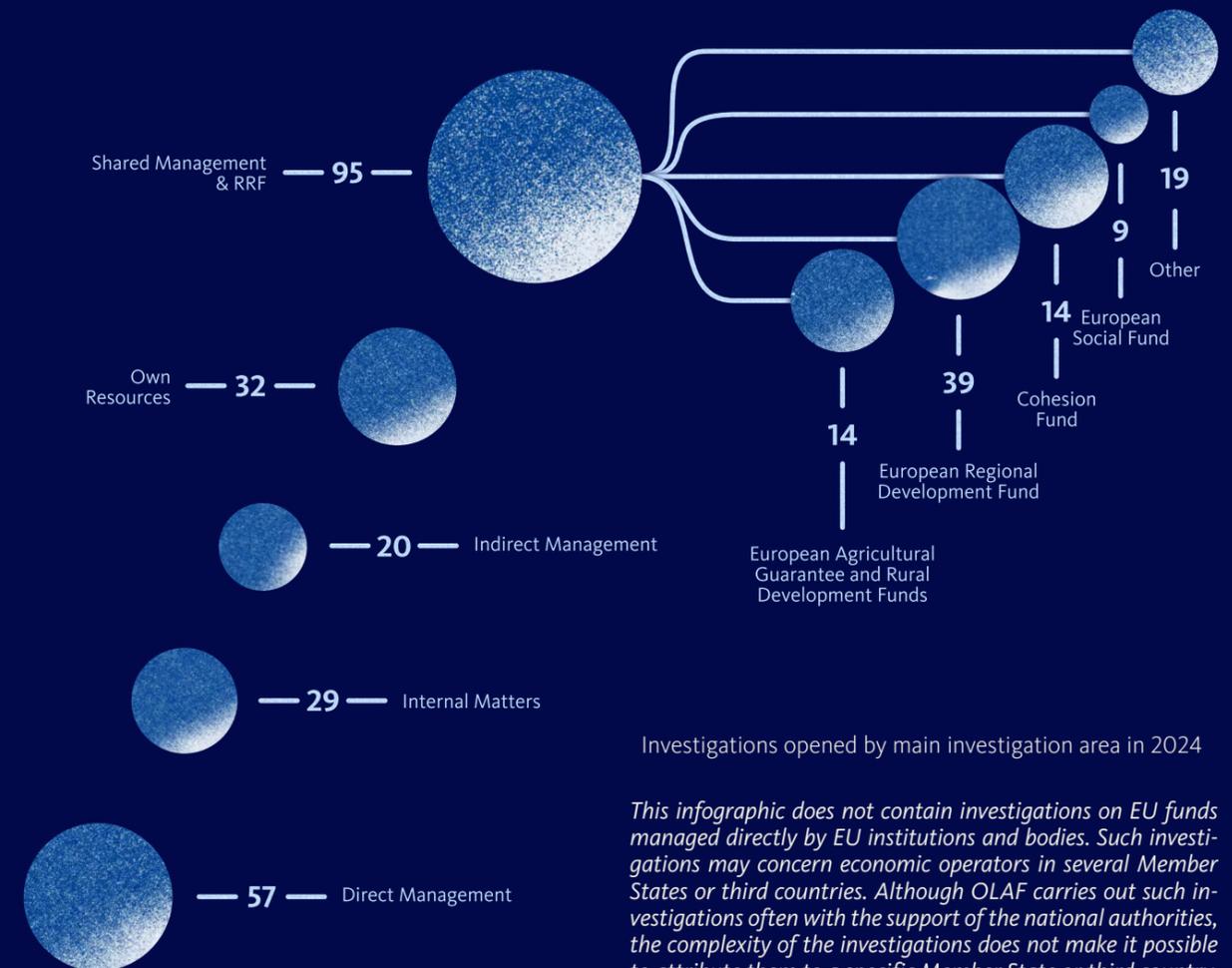
301 Recommendations

188 Financial recommendations

60 Administrative recommendations

30 Judicial recommendations

23 Disciplinary recommendations



Investigations opened by main investigation area in 2024

This infographic does not contain investigations on EU funds managed directly by EU institutions and bodies. Such investigations may concern economic operators in several Member States or third countries. Although OLAF carries out such investigations often with the support of the national authorities, the complexity of the investigations does not make it possible to attribute them to a specific Member State or third country.

Protecting EU funds

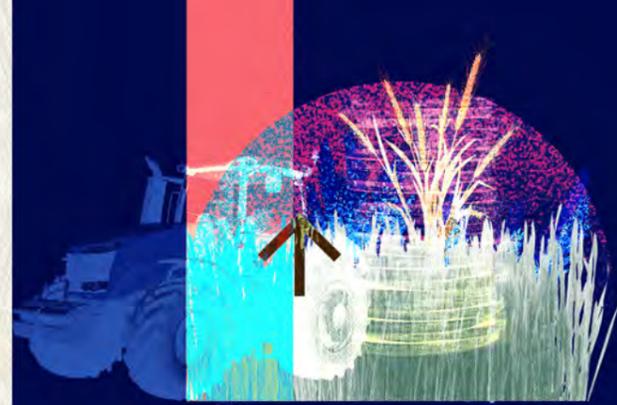
Protecting EU funds is a critical responsibility. Each year, the EU disburses hundreds of billions in funds to Member States, non-EU countries, partners, and organisations worldwide to achieve its strategic objectives. The primary spending areas include the European Structural and Investment Funds, agricultural funds, research and innovation funds such as Horizon, and other direct expenditure schemes like the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and external aid. These funds aim to finance European political priorities, fostering a stronger, smarter, competitive, and resilient Europe while improving citizens' lives by supporting sectors such as agriculture, education, research and innovation, environment, and industry.

OLAF plays a crucial role in protecting these resources. Its mandate is to detect, investigate, and prevent any potential fraud or irregularities in EU expenditures. By doing so, OLAF ensures that the EU budget and financial interests are safeguarded. In other words, OLAF makes sure that EU taxpayers' money reaches priority funding areas, where it is intended, and where it benefits society the most.

In 2024, OLAF carried out investigations into several instances of illegal activities affecting multiple strands of EU funding. These included a significant corruption scandal that rocked one of the EU Member States, raising questions about political accountability and transparency. A waste facility was another focus, highlighting severe mismanagement and environmental neglect, which, if left unchecked, could have had devastating consequences for both the environment and public health.

Finally, irregular procedures were identified during the construction of a sport facility mainly intended for young people. Our investigation uncovered a conflict of interest and led to the recommendation to recover part of the EU funds.

Overall, OLAF's work in 2024 underscores its vital role in maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of EU funding schemes.



Serious corruption in farming payments

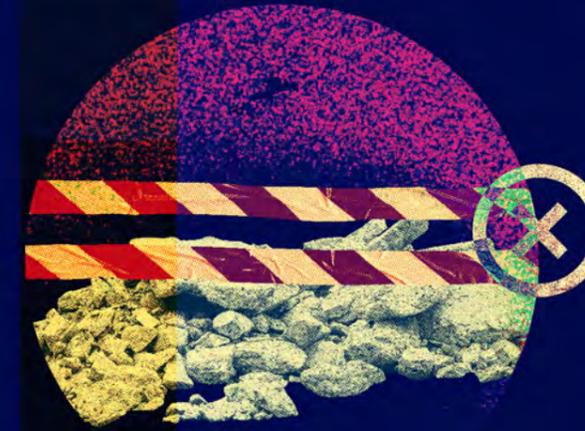
In March 2024, OLAF closed the last of its six investigations into the 'Dobytčár case. The Stock breeder corruption scandal, as it became known, saw around **€10 million** of bribes being paid by farmers to Slovak officials to illegitimately access EU agricultural funds. Working closely with Slovak national law enforcement and judiciary, OLAF helped uncover systemic and widespread use of bribes to ensure the undue approval of rural development projects for EU co-financed subsidies from 2015 to 2020.

Our investigations focused on 39 projects including the purchase of heavy farming equipment, modernisation of farming infrastructure and renovation of rural premises.

The investigations established that, in addition to bribery, numerous irregularities occurred including conflict of interest, tender manipulation, irregular sub-contracting, inflated project costs and improper implementation.

OLAF recommended the recovery of **€7.5 million** paid from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the immediate reimbursement of **€2.5 million** of European Investment Bank loans which had contributed national support to the projects. Specific criminal acts by suspected beneficiaries, suppliers, consultants and individuals associated with the projects were reported to the Slovak judicial authorities.

€7 500 000
recommended for recovery



A 'rubbish' Greek tragedy

In 2022 OLAF launched a gripping investigation into a solid waste Greek landfill project. When the dust settled in 2024, the findings were nothing short of scandalous. An intricate array of irregularities emerged, culminating in a staggering **€1 million** loss for the EU.

This landfill, constructed in 2016, lay dormant for its first three years of existence. When it finally sprang to life in 2019, it operated in bold defiance of environmental laws, without a fire safety licence, and far beyond its permit as an urban solid waste facility. It morphed into a chaotic dumping ground for all sorts of refuse, with equipment either shattered or useless.

Ultimately, we discovered that the landfill in question was not even eligible for EU funding and was incorrectly included in the eligible expenditure by Greek authorities.

We recommended that **€1.165 million** be returned to the EU budget.

€1 165 000
recommended for recovery

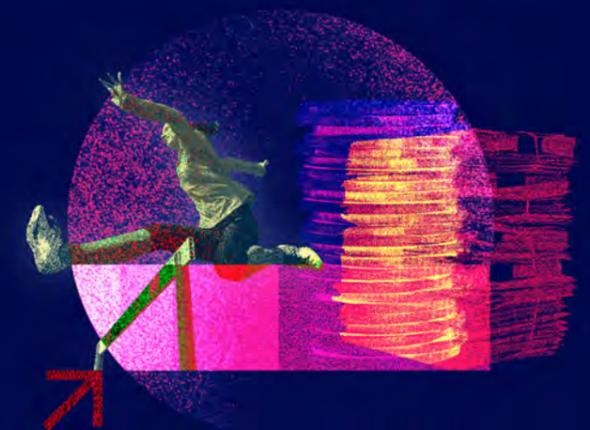
Unsporting behaviour

The Commission has helped create a European Health Union that protects the health of its citizens. One way this is done is by providing funds to build sports centres that contribute to physical and mental health and well-being.

OLAF uncovered a conflict of interest that affected EU funds meant for the construction of a sports facility in Germany.

Our investigators gathered evidence to show irregularities and conflicts of interest in the implementation of the project and a conflict of interest involving the local municipality during the procurement procedure.

OLAF recommended excluding **€875 345** from EU financing.



€ 875 345
recommended for recovery

Protecting EU revenue

Fraudsters employ numerous tactics to avoid paying into EU revenue streams, including schemes to evade customs and antidumping duties, along with taxes like VAT. They also smuggle controlled items, such as tobacco, and introduce counterfeit and substandard goods into the EU market.

These illicit activities not only drain the EU and Member State budgets but also pose significant risks to public health, safety, and the environment. Furthermore, they disadvantage legitimate producers and threaten European competitiveness, affecting jobs and economic growth.

The following section highlights some of the work that we did last year with EU national and global authorities to tackle this activity. Including the estimated €623 million impact we had on identifying and preventing fraudsters declaring their imports at a lower value so that they evaded paying correct custom duties.



Dealing with smuggling

Tobacco products account for a large share of the smuggled or counterfeit goods targeted by OLAF each year. Whether they are genuine cigarettes sold on the black market or fake cigarettes passed off as genuine products, these illicit sales line the pockets of criminal organisations and lead to the loss of millions of euros that could otherwise be used to finance projects and programmes for the benefit of citizens across the EU.

In 2024, OLAF continued to support Member States by gathering information from non-EU countries, monitoring suspicious consignments and coordinating investigation cases. Our activities in this field led to seizures of over 128 million illicit cigarettes worldwide, including 50 million cigarettes confiscated at the EU's external borders.

OLAF also helped seize 310 tons of raw tobacco, preventing losses of some €96 million to the EU and national budgets, whilst also targeting illicit tobacco factories and tackling the relatively new illegal trade in e-cigarettes.

Illicit tobacco factories

The emergence of illicit tobacco factories within EU Member States often triggers instances of forced migration. Workers in these clandestine operations frequently enter the EU without proper documentation and find themselves shuttled between illegal factories across Europe, enduring precarious and exploitative living conditions. Through strong collaboration with both EU and non-EU authorities, we have successfully provided key intelligence that has led to the identification of several such illegal production sites across the continent.

Fictitious exports of waterpipe tobacco

In 2024, we uncovered novel routes and methods being exploited for the fraudulent exports of waterpipe tobacco. These schemes involve tobacco allegedly being exported to non-EU countries on paper, while remaining in Europe for sale on the black market.

This form of excise fraud not only causes significant financial losses to the EU budget but also funnels substantial profits into criminal activities such as trafficking and terrorism.

E-cigarettes

The rapid rise of new tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco items, has gained significant popularity, particularly among young consumers worldwide.

As the market for these products expands rapidly across the EU, so does the risk of fraud. In response, we have intensified our focus on the e-cigarette sector. The OLAF Tobacco Conference, held in Dublin in October 2024, focused on exchanging intelligence and best practices for investigating and combating the illicit trade in e-cigarettes. These products pose substantial risks for tax evasion and intellectual property violations and present considerable health hazards. Unregulated e-cigarettes often contain dangerously high nicotine levels, and uncontrolled chemical additives for flavouring make them even more hazardous.

Seizures of illicit e-cigarettes and the busting of unauthorised production units have already been recorded in several EU Member States. Recognising the evolving threats in this domain, we remain committed to prioritising and addressing new developments within the e-cigarette market.



F-gases

In recent years we have worked with partners to prevent the illicit and highly lucrative trade in refrigerant gases (F-gases).

The gases that are used in refrigeration equipment are often hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) which replaced ozone-depleting substances. Whilst HFCs do not diminish the ozone layer they are potent greenhouse gases, which can lead to global warming.

To address this issue, the EU adopted a regulation in 2014 (since revised in 2024) to reduce the amount of HFCs in the marketplace. However, criminal networks and others created an illicit market for these gases in a bid to bypass the regulation.

Tackling this black market is an operational priority for OLAF. By preventing the illicit trade in F-gases we are protecting citizens, the environment and legitimate trade.

We help suppress the illegal trade in F-gases by supporting cross-border investigations and working closely with national and international authorities passing on information and intelligence on suspicious shipments and operators. In 2023, we picked up an international award for our work in this area and in 2024 we did not rest on our laurels.

Last year we carried out Joint Customs 'Operation Khione' that led to the interception of the equivalent of more than **400 000 tons of CO₂**, worth **€4.5 million**.

This Operation allowed us to identify and expose new and highly creative schemes put in place by the fraudsters to circumvent controls. For example, they would declare steel construction elements instead of F-gas cylinders because X-ray checks would not trigger questions by the customs officers. Another example is the misdeclaration of the type of gas contained in the cylinders, for example propane instead of F-gas. If a local customs office does not have the appropriate testing equipment, it cannot detect the fraud.

OLAF's herculean sporting effort

The Euro 2024 Football Championship in Germany and the Paris Games in summer 2024 attracted worldwide attention. At the time of these competitions, the demand for official products, such as apparel, accessories, electronics, gifts, and souvenirs, intended for both contestants and the wider public, increased.

Fraudsters are always eager to make money from major sporting events by producing and distributing on the market counterfeit "official" products.

Little do they care that these products may present actual risks for human health and safety (for example counterfeit mascots with small pieces that come off easily and can be swallowed by children leading to suffocation or poisoning).

These products harm legitimate businesses, which produce the same items by abiding by the regulations in place. By respecting the law, businesses end up being undercut by fraudsters who, by ignoring the applicable standards and avoiding paying taxes, can offer the same goods at lower prices.

In the Joint Customs Operation led by French Customs and co-led by OLAF and the German Customs Investigation Bureau, more than **750 000 fake items** were seized, including sportswear, sports shoes, toys, and sporting equipment.

This operation was a considerable success because of the arduous work of customs authorities across the EU and OLAF. Together, we prevented fake goods entering the EU well in advance of the sporting events, protecting EU citizens and businesses.



Protecting from the evasion of customs duties and VAT at import

Fraudsters often try to declare their imports at a lower value so that they can evade paying correct custom duties.

In 2024, OLAF continued to play a crucial role in supporting customs authorities by identifying undervaluation schemes and providing essential cross-border assistance for verifying and adjusting import values.

Our efforts against commercial fraud, including the evasion of import duties and VAT, had an impressive, estimated **impact of €623 million**, either through recommended recoveries or prevented losses.

Our past successes have led to a notable increase in the declared values of imports, aligning them more closely with statistical control thresholds, and reducing the overall incidence of suspected undervaluation fraud. Nevertheless, in certain Member States, significant undervaluation schemes persist, often involving traders who vanish after their import operations, facilitating VAT evasion by exploiting customs procedure 42.

This procedure allows VAT exemption when goods enter one EU country but are destined for another, with VAT to be paid in the destination country.

Post-COVID-19, the EU's digital economy has expanded rapidly, driven by e-commerce, particularly the Business-to-Business-to-Consumer (B2B2C) model. This growth involves goods arriving in large consignments destined for warehouses, before being dispatched to consumers via online platforms.

However, this boom has also led to rising instances of non-declared goods, product misclassification, and unauthorised goods release during transit. As a result, im-

ported goods have circumvented import duties and VAT, missing vital EU regulatory, safety, and quality controls.

In 2024, OLAF made significant strides in detecting financial crimes against EU interests in customs matters. Our administrative investigations and mutual assistance with Member States paved the way for criminal investigations by the EPPO, particularly highlighting cases involving biodiesel and bicycles.

For instance, OLAF and EPPO uncovered a fraud scheme involving biodiesel imports in the Netherlands, with an estimated financial damage exceeding **€60 million**, due to false origin declarations of US-based biodiesel. We also spurred an EPPO investigation into a large-scale fraud involving e-bike imports from China, subject to anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties up to 80%. This fraud, involving approximately 25 containers smuggled via Poland, impacted the EU budget by at least €1.8 million in unpaid duties.

OLAF and EPPO collaborated on another significant fraud case involving bicycles from China. The systematic undervaluation and false origin declaration led to an estimated damage of €7.2 million to the EU budget. In response to such threats, OLAF urges Member States to implement precautionary and early recovery measures, ensuring a seamless blend of administrative measures and criminal proceedings for optimal EU budget protection.

In relation to the ongoing review of the Anti-Fraud Architecture, we see great potential in further exploiting this twin-track approach of EPPO and OLAF investigating cases, to ensure criminal sanctions are pursued effectively, as well as recovering relevant funds for the Union budget.

€200 million import fraud

Green mobility, particularly through electric bikes, boosts public health, quality of life, and environmental sustainability. Yet import fraud undermines genuine EU producers and distorts market competition.

In 2024, we concluded a case revealing fraudulent activities with e-bikes, scooters, bicycles, textiles, and footwear not declared at customs. These items were improperly released from transit and falsely re-exported, evading approximately **€120 million in import duties** and **€80 million in VAT**.

Fraudsters employed tactics like fictitious importers to evade customs debt and manipulated customs procedure 42 to sidestep VAT declaration. All operations were centrally managed by a single non-EU logistics company, reflecting a growing trend.

By leveraging intelligence, analysing trade flows, and monitoring online platforms, we alerted EU customs authorities, identified implicated warehouses, coordinated inspections, and successfully seized some of the illegally imported goods.

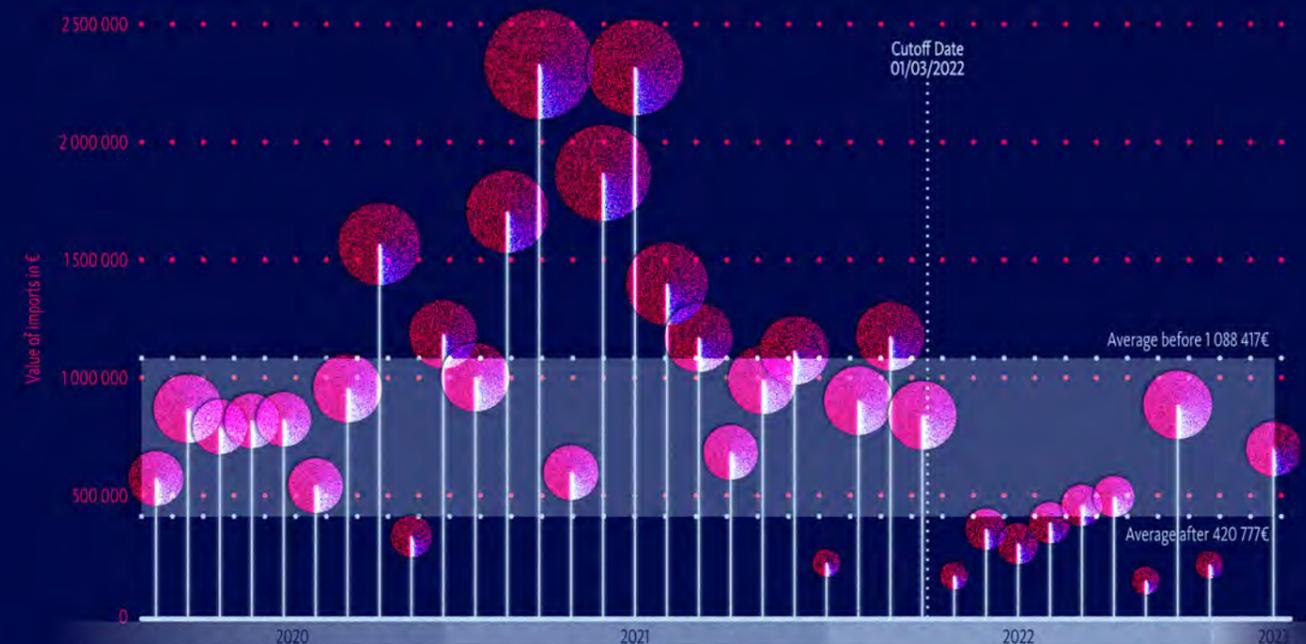
OLAF's impact on customs fraud investigations go beyond the recovery of import duties by the customs authorities of EU Member States. These investigations also establish the amount of VAT fraud at import linked to commercial fraud.

We also alert customs authorities of the existence of a suspected trade-flow right from the start, trying to discontinue it in a preventive effort. Precautionary measures are requested to Member States for either taking guarantees from importers or proceeding with the recovery of the duties evaded when this can be early established.

It is also possible to quantify the amounts prevented from being evaded, comparing the trade-flows concerned before and after OLAF's intervention.



The following graph shows that when EU customs authorities are alerted about suspicious e-bike trade (via Mutual Assistance communication), the number of suspected imports decreases.



Import duties evaded and recommended to be recovered to customs authorities of EU Member States corresponds to the amount of evaded VAT payments identified by OLAF. We advised Member States' authorities to recover these amounts, thereby increasing a country's general wealth and protecting the EU's budget

VAT fraud at import established in OLAF customs fraud investigations corresponds to the amounts lost due to VAT scams at the import level such as undervaluation fraud

Precautionary measures sent to customs authorities of EU Member States refers to the amounts recovered by the Member States after being alerted by OLAF

Amounts prevented from being evaded as a result of OLAF investigative activities shows the amount that OLAF actions in tackling VAT fraud have had on deterring others from carrying out similar schemes. For example, by helping shut down a factory supplying the EU with illicit and untaxed goods, we ensure that fewer illicit goods are introduced in Europe



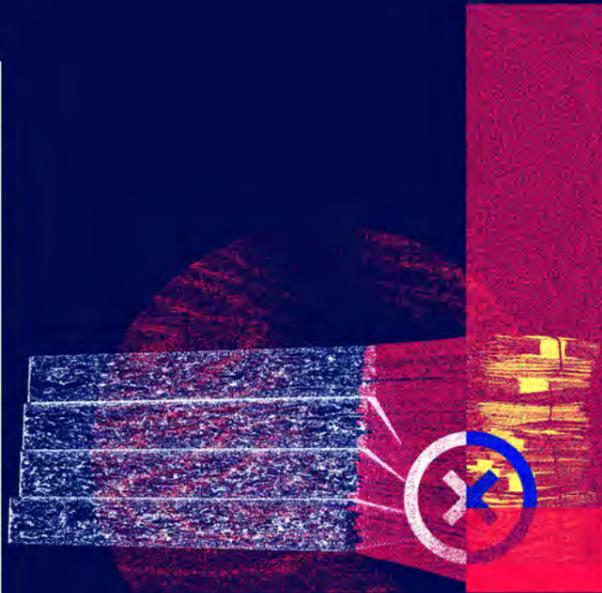
Sanctions

OLAF possesses extensive expertise in data analysis, which includes examining trade patterns, unusual movements of goods, and other irregular behaviors of individual operators. This expertise allows us to be proactive and react swiftly to new and emerging fraudulent threats. It was this proficiency that led the European Commission to turn to OLAF when seeking assistance to monitor sanctions imposed on Russia and its allies after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Since the introduction of EU sanctions, OLAF has used its expertise to ensure these measures are as effective as possible. In 2024, we collaborated with EU and national partners to uphold the integrity of sanctions policies. Our efforts highlight our critical role in supporting international peace and security through rigorous monitoring and enforcement activities.

One notable operation in 2024 was Operation Probirka (Russian for Test-tube), where we aided Spanish authorities in investigating the export of chemical substances from Spain. It was suspected that certain companies were circumventing EU sanctions by rerouting goods through intermediaries in Kyrgyzstan, with the true destination being Russia. Employing our analytical capabilities, we gathered export data from various EU Member States and shared vital intelligence with the Spanish investigators. This collaboration provided critical evidence confirming that these illegal exports were indeed making their way to Russia.

As a direct consequence of our efforts, Spanish authorities arrested four individuals in Catalonia, three of whom were Russian nationals. The operation also led to the seizure of 13,000 kg of a chemical compound subject to export restrictions at the Port of Barcelona. This significant enforcement action underscored the effectiveness of OLAF's investigatory processes and its unwavering commitment to upholding EU laws.



The investigation unveiled a complex scheme orchestrated by a Spanish company managed by Russian nationals. This scheme utilized shell companies in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to obscure the true destination of the sanctioned goods, ultimately rerouting them to Russia. The discovery of such elaborate networks highlights not only the sophistication of sanction evasion tactics but also the importance of OLAF's role in dismantling these illegal operations.

Moreover, OLAF led an EU-Kazakhstan mission that uncovered two companies in Kazakhstan exporting plywood to the EU containing Russian and Belarussian birchwood, in violation of EU sanctions. This mission exemplified our ability to conduct comprehensive cross-border investigations, further reinforcing OLAF's reputation as an instrumental body in safeguarding EU interests and ensuring compliance with international regulations.

In these endeavors, OLAF not only proved its capability in enforcing sanctions but also demonstrated the critical importance of international cooperation in tackling global challenges. Our work continues to be pivotal in maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's sanctions regimes, protecting the integrity of the international trade system, and supporting global stability.

Ukraine

Our work in policing EU sanctions against Russia and Belarus was critical in weakening the war machine that relentlessly attacked Ukraine throughout 2024. By enforcing the sanctions, OLAF plays a pivotal role in supporting global efforts to curb aggression and uphold international law. Our actions contribute to the broader aim of preserving peace and security in the region and demonstrate the EU's commitment to upholding democratic values and protecting sovereign nations from unjust aggression.

One such case involved OLAF's expertise in tracking down the misuse of EU funds earmarked for critical infrastructure, specifically power generators for Ukraine. This investigation was part of our broader mandate to ensure

that valuable resources are used effectively and reach those in need. Through meticulous tracking and analysis, OLAF was able to address and mitigate instances of misappropriation, ensuring that funds intended for humanitarian aid were appropriately allocated and had the desired impact on the ground.

Another case that was quite distinctive and showcased OLAF's capacity to adapt to unique circumstances involved the rescue of two beluga whales, weighing around 1,000 kilos each.

This highly unusual mission involved navigating geopolitical complexities and coordinating cross-border efforts along the Moldovan border, eventually involving the Oceanographic Institute of Valencia.



Supporting Ukraine with a €114 million investigation

In 2024, OLAF concluded its in-depth investigation into substantial breaches of procurement rules, transparency, and financial management related to a **€114 million** EU-funded project managed by Poland's Government Agency for Strategic Reserves (RARS). This crucial project was designed to procure and deliver power generators to Ukrainian regions grappling with power shortages due to ongoing conflict.

Thanks to our efforts, an impressive **€91 million** has been targeted for recovery, with an additional **€22 million** safeguarded from potential misuse. Working in close collaboration with the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau (CBA) and the Polish Public Prosecutor's Office, OLAF's investigation led to the arrest of multiple individuals. Our comprehensive analysis revealed rampant overpricing, restricted competition, and undue favoritism toward certain contractors. Despite RARS's reluctance to fully cooperate, we determined that its procurement process violated essential principles of transparency, fair competition, equal treatment, and fiscal responsibility. Contracts were awarded without authentic competitive bidding, fundamentally undermining the effective allocation of EU funds.

Moreover, our investigation uncovered that RARS granted improper advantages through significant advance payments to contractors without adequate safeguards, placing EU finances at severe risk. Some contractors in-

flated their charges to the agency by up to 40% over their purchase costs, causing significant overpricing of the EU-funded generators.

Supporting our Ukrainian allies in the face of unwarranted Russian aggression continues to be a key EU priority. OLAF, alongside its partners, remains steadfast in ensuring that EU financial and technical resources are utilised effectively, delivering the maximum possible impact for Ukraine and its citizens amidst the adversity they face.



Whale of a tale!

OLAF and its partners consistently employ a proven formula for success, frequently collaborating with customs and anti-fraud authorities both within the EU and globally. Our role often involves facilitating operations that safeguard the EU's financial interests and protect taxpayers' money. However, there are moments when our efforts extend beyond the expected.

Such was the case last year when, in an extraordinary collaboration with SeaWorld, Oceanogràfic of Valencia, and Georgia Aquarium, **we helped rescue two Beluga whales**, Plombir and Miranda, from Ukraine. These whales were housed in the NEMO Dolphinarium in war-torn Kharkiv, located dangerously close, just one kilometre away, from areas experiencing frequent bombing.

In a very complex and high-risk rescue mission, it was determined to relocate these majestic 1 000 kg creatures to Oceanogràfic in Valencia. The rescue operation commenced with a 12-hour road trek from Kharkiv to Odessa. Following thorough health assessments conducted by teams from Oceanogràfic, Georgia Aquarium, and SeaWorld, the whales continued their journey towards the Moldovan border.

Here, OLAF's intervention became critical, expediting the border crossing for the easily stressed mammals and significantly reducing their transport time to Chisinau Airport. In this delicate mission, every minute saved was essential. A subsequent flight successfully transported the belugas to Valencia, where they were swiftly and safely transferred to Oceanogràfic upon arrival.

Investigating within the EU institutions

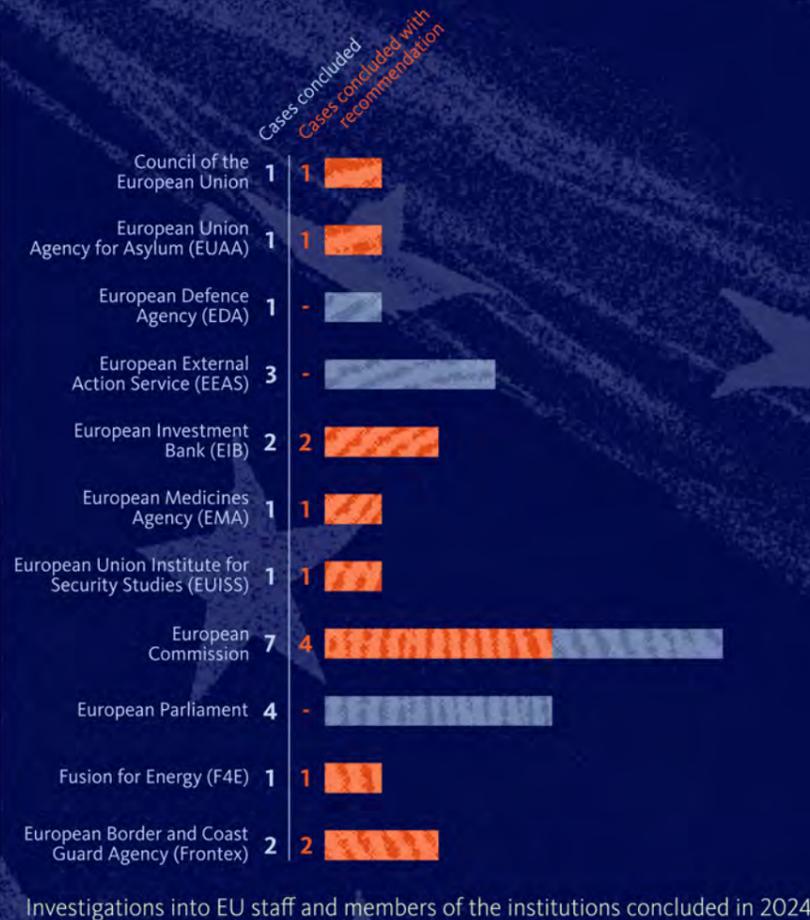
OLAF defends the reputation and integrity of EU Institutions, Bodies and Agencies.

To do so we have a mandate to carry out investigations into serious allegations of fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity affecting the EU financial interests but also the allegations of serious matters relating to the discharge of professional duties of EU staff members or Members of the Institutions.

We do this completely independently without fear or favour.

In 2024, our work in this area included an investigation into an EU agency's training programs finding irregularities worth €4.4 million.

We also investigated a case of costly decisions at an EU body.



Misinformation & costly decisions

In 2024, we identified over €120 000 worth of undue allowances and salary payments made to two employees of an EU body.

The investigation established that the Director who approved the allowances and the staff members who accepted them knew that the payments broke the rules.

Following an external audit, a new Director, who had taken office in the meantime, ordered that part of the amount that was unduly paid to the employees be returned (recovered), as opposed to the full amount.

The investigation revealed that this decision was based on erroneous external legal advice given to the new Director. We further ascertained that one of the reasons for the wrong decision was that one staff member who had received the undue payment had provided his hierarchy and external auditors with incorrect and obsolete information about staff rules applied in the EU body.

This caused a wrong interpretation of the Staff Regulations that in turn misled the new Director.

Furthermore, we revealed that, to 'compensate' one of the staff members for the 'lost' income, one of the employees was given a pay rise. This was not allowed and caused undue use of public money.



We recommended that the body take a number of actions, such as recovering over €120 000 from the staff members concerned and initiating disciplinary proceedings against the Director and the staff members involved. Moreover, we recommended the EU body to review the recovery process for unduly paid sums and update its staff rules on conflicts of interest. Finally, we suggested making sure that appropriate legal advice is always available.



Taken for granted

In 2024, we investigated an EU agency's training programs and found irregularities worth €4.4 million. The agency failed to account for depreciation costs, reimbursing full costs for goods like laptops and furniture, even though they were only used for a short time.

Contrary to the European Commission's guidelines, the Agency excluded depreciation costs from eligible expenses when determining the unit costs. This action resulted in the Agency funding costs in their entirety, even when the duration of training actions was significantly shorter than the lifespan of the goods or services purchased.

For example, laptops with a 3-5 year lifespan were fully reimbursed after only a few months of use. The Agency also funded furniture that could have been used for 5-10 years, but was only used for a few months. Our calculations showed that this approach resulted in unintended financial benefits for the grant beneficiaries of at least €3.44 million between 2020 and 2022. We also found over €1 million in ineligible costs.

Further, we observed inconsistencies in the calls for proposals and grant agreements for the training programmes delivered between 2020 and 2022.

We found costs reimbursed by the Agency that were not eligible for funding, either because they were not actually incurred, were lower than that initially claimed, or fell outside the eligible timeframe. These ineligible costs amounted, in total, to over €1 million.

Though we did not find evidence of fraud or misconduct, we still issued a financial recommendation. As a result of the investigation, the Agency also amended its funding methods and tightened its ex-post controls.

Gifts were welcome...but not declared

In 2024, OLAF closed a case concerning irregularities and misconduct by a senior staff member of an EU Institution.

The person in question was alleged to have taken business trips to non-EU countries, where part of their expenses were paid for by these countries, or entities connected to them. We also focused on whether the person in question disclosed sensitive and/or confidential information to third countries or entities.

Our investigation established that the senior staff member failed to be transparent in their dealings with the countries and entities. We confirmed that the person failed to declare their flights, hospitality, gifts as well as the complimentary benefits that their spouse received whilst accompanying them on a number of business trips.

We further identified that a non-EU country's economic operator provided the senior staff member and their family with complimentary flight tickets and hotel accommodation.

Finally, we also proved that the senior staff member breached their duty of professionalism, loyalty and confidentiality by unduly sharing some internal and sensitive documents with a non-EU country's entity which was not the intended recipient.

However, we did not conclude that these gifts and preferential treatment led the person to act favourably on behalf of a non-EU country or non-EU entity.

We concluded our investigation by recommending that the EU institution initiate disciplinary proceedings against the staff member in relation to the breaches of duties and obligations arising from the Staff Regulations.

Impact of OLAF investigations

When OLAF concludes an investigation, it often issues recommendations to the competent EU and national authorities, inviting them to take action to redress the fraud, corruption or other illegal activity uncovered by the investigation.

OLAF's recommendations are intended to protect the EU budget and to uphold the rule of law. More specifically, OLAF's recommendations aim to serve several purposes:

Financial recommendations invite competent EU or national authorities to recover amounts that were unduly spent or prevent them from being irregularly spent, or in customs matters, not duly collected for the EU budget as a result of fraud or irregularities.

Judicial recommendations invite a Member State's judicial authorities to consider initiating criminal proceedings.

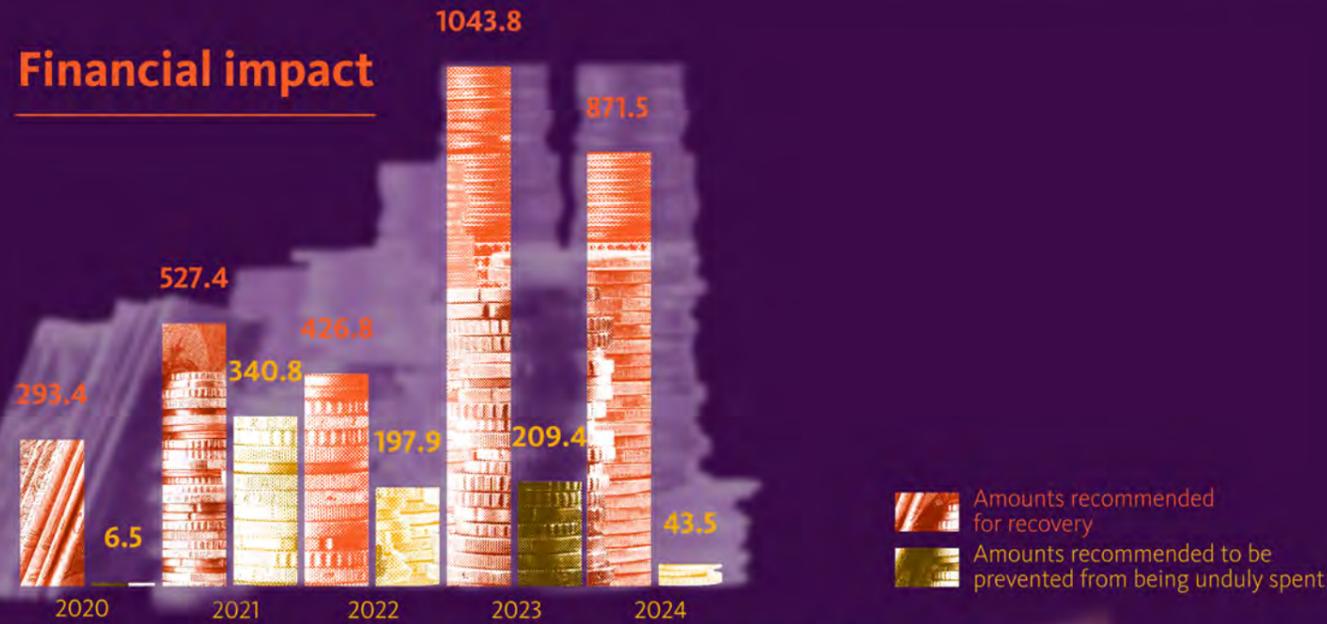
Disciplinary recommendations aim to sanction wrongdoing by EU staff or Members of EU bodies.

Administrative recommendations aim to reinforce existing policies and control systems. They can also recommend a specific administrative action, such as excluding an entity from future EU funding or to perform an audit or an administrative check. Administrative recommendations can also address systemic weaknesses uncovered in control systems.



Each year OLAF analyses the follow-up given to its recommendations and reports the results to the Commission's Corporate Management Board. A summary of the current analysis of such ongoing monitoring work is as follows.

Financial impact



Amounts recommended by OLAF for financial recovery from 2020 to 2024 (in € millions)

The sum recommended by OLAF for recovery is the result of OLAF's investigative work in 2024, not an indication of the overall level of fraud against the EU budget.

Key to an effective implementation of OLAF's financial recommendations is close cooperation with spending services, especially with Commission departments and executive agencies



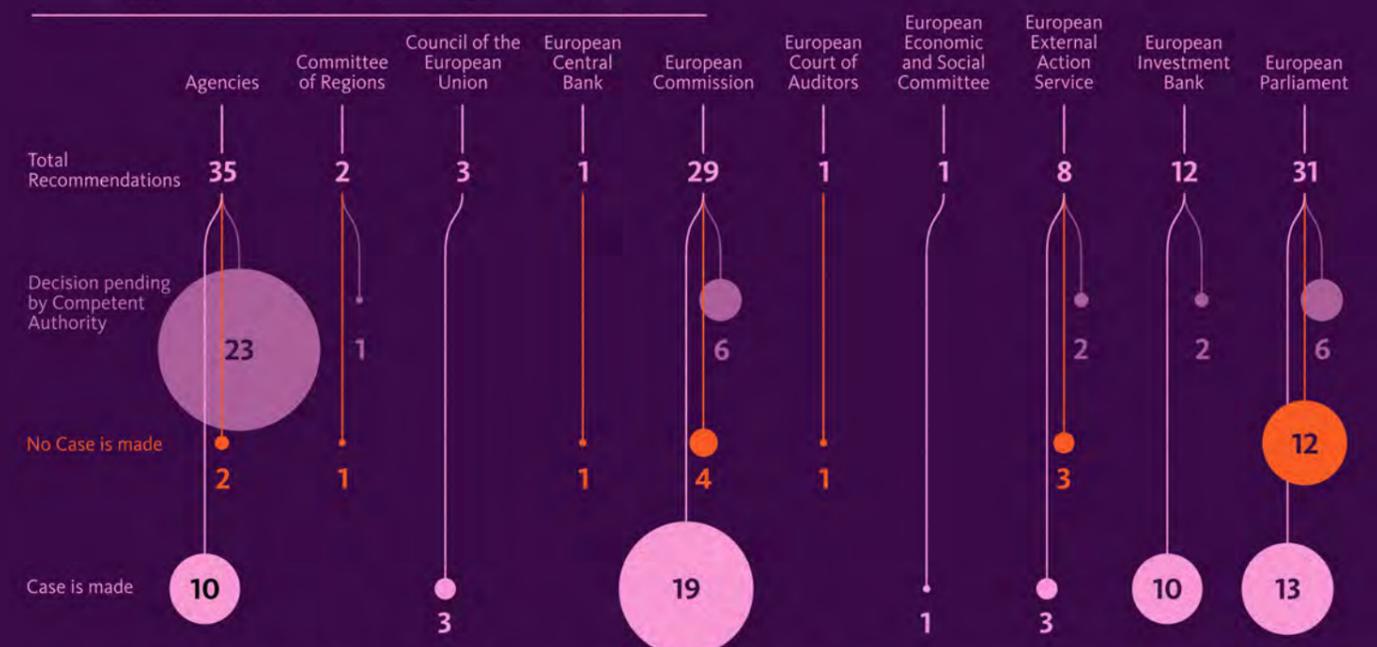
Recommendations by OLAF for financial recovery between 2020 and 2024

Disciplinary impact

Disciplinary Recommendations by OLAF between 2020 and 2024



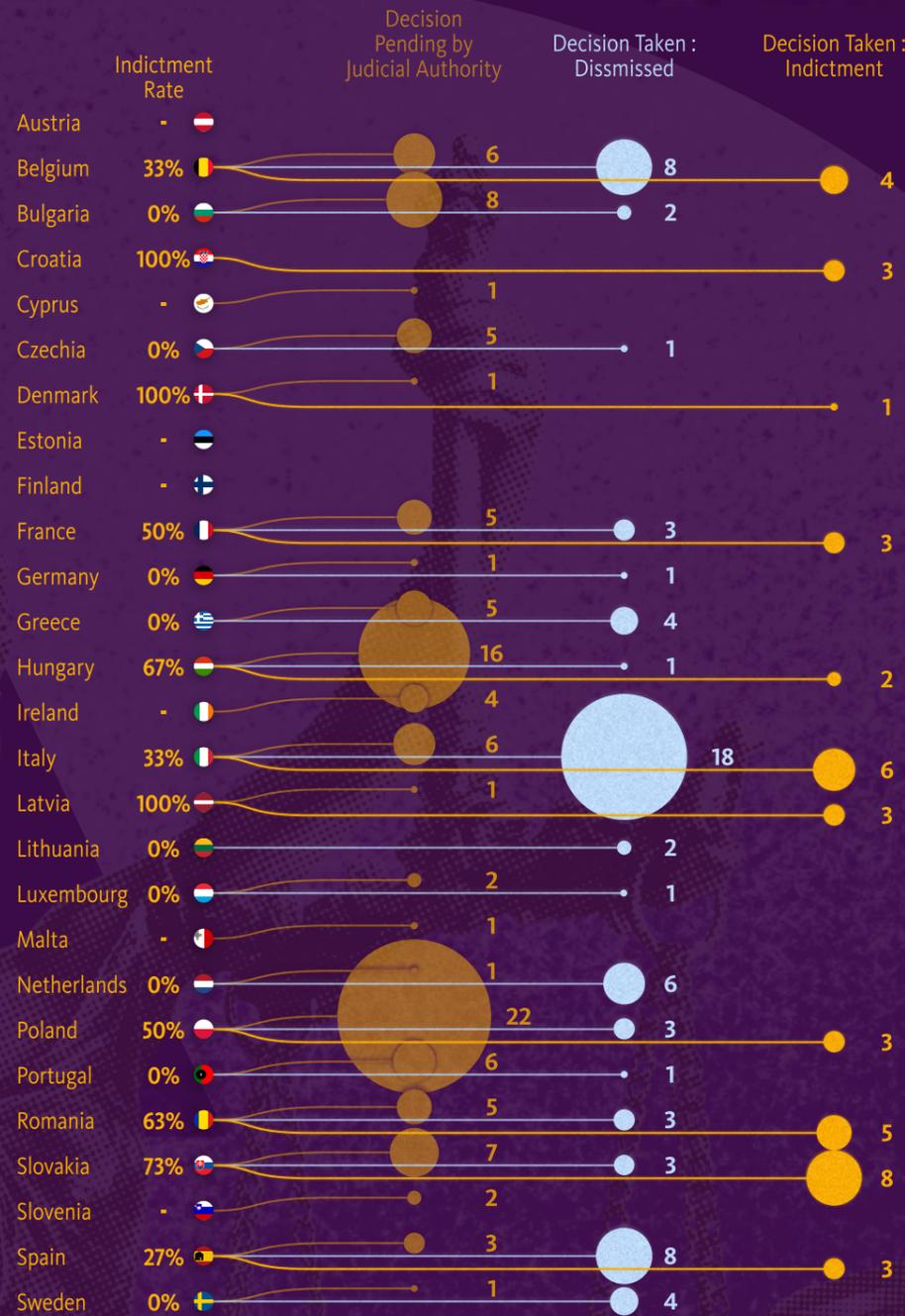
The disciplinary recommendations issued by OLAF concern serious misconduct of EU staff or members of the EU institutions and other EU bodies. The recommendations are made to the authority that has disciplinary powers within the institution or body concerned. When making such recommendations, OLAF does not specify the type of action that should be taken. The disciplinary authorities can implement as many recommendations as it sees fit and may take several actions following the same recommendation.



Actions taken by the appointing authorities following OLAF's disciplinary recommendations between 2020 and 2024

Judicial impact

Where an OLAF investigation finds sufficient grounds for suspecting a criminal offence, OLAF issues a judicial recommendation for the competent Member State authority to start criminal prosecution.



39% Average Indictment Rate

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) became operational in June 2021 and is mandated to directly investigate and prosecute criminals responsible for damaging the EU's financial interests in 22 EU Member States. This changed the nature of OLAF's judicial recommendations as the EPPO can now follow-up directly when it has the authority to do so.

Actions taken by national judicial authorities following OLAF's recommendations issued between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2024

Administrative impact

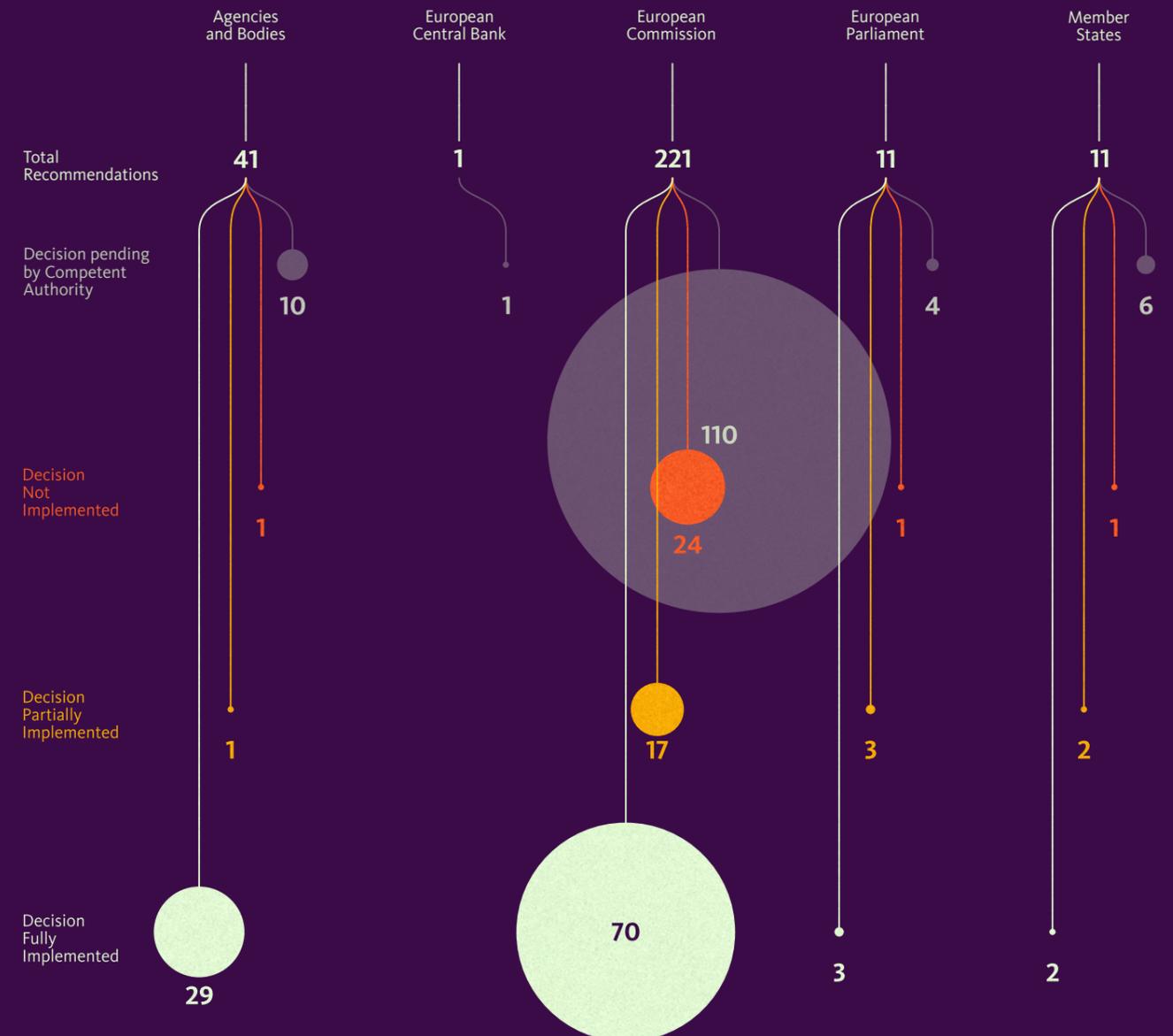
Administrative Recommendations by OLAF between 2020 and 2024



OLAF can issue two forms of administrative recommendations, either specific or generic.

Specific recommendations call for measures to be taken to address issues or irregularities which have been identified during the course of an investigation.

Generic recommendations go beyond a single investigation and are made to address systemic weaknesses in the regulatory framework and/or management and control systems.



Actions taken by the competent authorities following OLAF's administrative recommendations between 2020 and 2024

Recoveries and prevention



At the conclusion of its investigations, OLAF has the authority to issue financial recommendations to Member States, EU Institutions, bodies, offices, and agencies. These recommendations are pivotal as they specify amounts of EU expenditure that have been spent irregularly and EU revenue that has been evaded from the EU budget, which OLAF advises should be recovered. When planned disbursements have not yet occurred, OLAF recommends halting any irregular spending to prevent financial losses.

OLAF doesn't just issue recommendations; it actively monitors the outcomes of these financial recommendations to ensure compliance and recovery of funds. This ongoing oversight underscores OLAF's commitment to protecting the EU's financial interests and maintaining accountability. In the past three years alone, OLAF's investigations have yielded impressive results, leading to the recovery of €4.5 billion and preventing over €800 million in irregular spending. These figures highlight the effectiveness of OLAF's work in safeguarding EU funds and ensuring they are used appropriately to benefit member states and their citizens.



Anti-fraud Policies

One of OLAF's core mandates is developing anti-fraud policies for the European Commission. Prevention is better than cure and putting in place a framework, which makes sure that EU money reaches its intended recipients is a key objective.

To achieve this OLAF (along with other Commission departments) developed the Commission's anti-fraud strategy and coordinated its implementation in 2019.

In 2024, we oversaw the implementation within the European Commission of the 2023 action plan that accompanies its anti-fraud strategy. The plan includes 44 actions under seven themes that cover the Commission's priorities in fighting fraud. OLAF coordinates and monitors the implementation of the plan and leads approximately half of the actions. Progress was made under each objective throughout 2024.

Under the first theme, digitalisation, OLAF further developed the Irregularity Management System, making it more user-friendly such as improving search and statistics functions. The application now relies on state-of-the-art technology that allows for further technical developments in the future. OLAF also engaged in dialogues with several Member States to improve the quality and completeness of reported irregularities. We also implemented a new tool to improve the efficiency and accuracy of financial and administrative monitoring of follow-up to OLAF cases.

OLAF worked closely with the relevant services to implement actions on the second theme, the protection of the Resilience and Recovery Fund (RRF) and other funds under shared management. Following the finalisation of the legal framework on the reporting of irregularities affecting funds under shared management, OLAF set up a working group with national experts from the Member States to revise the existing handbook on the reporting of irregularities for the financial framework 2021-2027.

The third theme of reinforcing the protection of funds under indirect management and in the external relations area saw OLAF issuing new guidelines to countries beneficiary of pre-accession assistance on the reporting of irregularities in this policy area.

As regards the fourth theme of fighting customs fraud and protecting EU revenues, OLAF increased its knowledge and experience in data science, improved software tools and technology, and its access to the relevant data for anti-fraud purposes.

To reinforce the EU anti-fraud architecture, in line with the fifth theme, in 2024, OLAF developed and disseminated a dedicated methodology for anti-fraud strategies in decentralised agencies and joint undertakings and reinforced its anti-fraud training and guidance to these bodies.

We also provided advice to Commission services on their anti-fraud strategies, the sixth theme, related to the Commission's anti-fraud governance.

In relation to the seventh theme of strengthening the culture of ethics and anti-fraud in the Commission, OLAF expanded its strategic analytical work, notably through the analyses of the detection and reporting of irregularities and fraud in different sectors, as well as of the impact of and vulnerability to fraud in the different areas of the cohesion policy.

In 2024 OLAF continued raising fraud awareness, notably by providing around 50 training sessions to Commission services, agencies and external partners.

Cooperation with partners

Partnership and regular cooperation with EU institutions and bodies, national authorities (in both EU and non-EU countries), as well as with international organisations is key to protecting the EU's financial interests. OLAF has a truly global reach, with its staff often investigating across the world to protect EU taxpayers' money. It is often said that OLAF works best when it works with others.

Cooperation with partners in the EU and beyond

Over a number of years, OLAF has spearheaded numerous events bringing together national authorities from EU and candidate countries resulting in a vibrant exchange of experiences and best practices in the fight against fraud and irregularities.

In April, OLAF hosted the inaugural in-person meeting of the G7 Sub-Working Group on Export Control Enforcement, hearing from experts from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US on how to counteract sanction circumvention by Russia and Belarus.



The first Operational Partnership Conference with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) also took place in April 2024. Over 100 specialists from both organisations gathered in Brussels to exchange best practices and how to work together to overcome cross-border investigative challenges.



Another notable gathering in Brussels brought together 50 communication professionals, as part of the OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators Network (OAFCN), to explore the positives and negatives that Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays in public communication.

The annual OLAF Tobacco Conference in Dublin, co-hosted with Irish Revenue, brought together over 90 key figures from national customs and police authorities from EU and non-EU countries, EUROPOL, the World Customs Organization and industry leaders to exchange tactics on combatting tobacco smuggling.



In a significant event for anti-fraud collaboration, OLAF welcomed more than 100 representatives from the Anti-Fraud Coordination Services (AFCOS) and counterparts from EU candidate countries and potential candidates to share insights into their actions, with a special focus on protecting EU NextGeneration funding.



The use of AI in fraud prevention took centre stage in Athens, when OLAF and Greece's National Transparency Authority (NTA) hosted a high-level conference on safeguarding EU funds against rising threats.

In November 2024, with the Hungarian Presidency, OLAF organised the latest edition of the High-Level Conference on Customs and Fraud in Budapest.

The conference, built upon the outcome of the 2023 Seville Conference, discussing the anti-fraud work currently developed by OLAF and EU countries as well as exploring the best way of addressing common challenges such as e-commerce-related fraud and illicit imports of dangerous goods.

In Alicante, OLAF and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) co-hosted "Building on Lies: The Fight against Fake Construction Materials and Equipment," addressing the dangers of counterfeit trade and highlighting issues related to e-commerce fraud.



Throughout the year, OLAF delivered specialised training to boost anti-fraud and anti-corruption capabilities across Europe. Highlights included a session for 40 Ukrainian officials in February, analyst training during the AFIA conference in Budapest in June, and the 26th Digital Forensics and Analysts Training in Prague, emphasising enhanced techniques in fraud detection and investigation. The training in Prague also included participants from Ukraine.

In 2024 OLAF continued to widen and strengthen its network of international partners. The Office signed administrative cooperation arrangements with the Foreign Service Control Unit of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as with the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense respectively. By the end of 2024, OLAF had in place 38 such arrangements with national authorities around the globe and with 16 offices of international organisations.



Cooperation with EU Institutions and bodies

Re-enforcing the EU Anti-Fraud Architecture

Robust collaboration with EU national authorities and EU institutions and bodies, that have complementary mandates with OLAF, is key to safeguarding the EU's financial interests.

Throughout the year, inter-institutional dialogues were facilitated by the European Commission, allowing for dynamic exchanges of views. Alongside traditional dialogue partners such as the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission, the year saw the inclusion, for the second time, of all key anti-fraud players at the EU level: the European Court of Auditors, the EPPO, Eurojust, and Europol. A focal point of the discussions between these actors was how artificial intelligence could be used to enhance the protection of the EU's financial interests.

OLAF took part in a dedicated working group with Europol, Eurojust and the EPPO. The group endeavoured to enhance interoperability and information sharing among EU anti-fraud entities, particularly concerning the EU's support for Ukraine in response to the Russian aggression. This kind of collaborative effort is key to reinforcing the EU anti-fraud architecture to address evolving challenges efficiently and cohesively.

European Parliament



Throughout 2024, OLAF actively strengthened its relationships with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) across various political groups and committees to advance collaborative efforts in safeguarding the EU's financial interests, particularly regarding the budgetary discharge procedure.

OLAF's Director-General, Ville Itälä, engaged in numerous discussions with key parliamentary stakeholders, addressing crucial topics such as transparency, integrity, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the Rule of Law. Following the European parliamentary elections in June 2024, OLAF reached out to MEPs in newly constituted committees, notably the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT) and the Budget Committee (BUDG).

These interactions aimed to provide comprehensive insights into OLAF's pivotal role in protecting the EU's financial interests and to aid preparations for the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

European Court of Auditors



OLAF and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) continued their cooperation to safeguard EU funds, ensure transparency and accountability. During 2024, OLAF initiated 25 selection cases and opened six investigations based on information reported by the ECA in that or the previous year.

In November, over 100 ECA and OLAF staff took part in the annual OLAF – ECA Workshop, a hybrid event hosted by OLAF. The workshop facilitated building connections and exchanging views on an array of topical issues, including work to protect the EU's financial interests in Ukraine, the rule of law, and how to combat fraud and conflict of interest in public procurement. In December, a group of OLAF staff attended a seminar on corruption in public procurement organised by the ECA in Luxembourg.

The European Public Prosecutor's Office

OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) have distinct yet complementary mandates with a common mission: protecting the EU's financial interests. OLAF conducts administrative investigations into irregularities, fraud against the EU budget, corruption and any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the EU as well as serious misconduct within the European institutions. On the other hand, the EPPO prosecutes crimes affecting the EU's financial interests in 24 Member States. Our collaboration is vital for safeguarding the EU budget and taxpayers' money. OLAF and EPPO cooperation is a process not an event and since the EPPO's inception in June 2021, our two bodies have effectively leveraged existing cooperation frameworks and fine-tuned our collaboration into a specific working arrangement.



Given new EU financial instruments and an expanded EU budget, OLAF and the EPPO are continuing to enhance synergies among investigators and prosecutors to offer greater protection of the EU's financial interests. In 2024, OLAF referred 74 cases to the EPPO, leading to the opening of 69 criminal investigations based on past and current transmissions. Throughout the year, OLAF completed 26 complementary investigations and initiated 17 more, also directly aiding the EPPO with digital forensic support in several cases. Notable collaborations include an investigation into projects in Czechia and a €20 million fraud case in Romania.

Infographics

Investigations concluded in 2024 concerning use of EU funds under shared and indirect management or RRF, linked to Member states

Investigations concluded in 2024 concerning use of EU funds under shared and indirect management or RRF, linked to third countries

Investigations opened by main investigation area in 2024

OLAF investigation results related to customs fraud in 2024

Investigations into EU staff and members of the institutions concluded in 2024

Amounts recommended by OLAF for financial recovery from 2020 to 2024 (in € millions)

Recommendations by OLAF for financial recovery between 2020 and 2024

Actions taken by the appointing authorities following OLAF's disciplinary recommendations between 2014 and 2024

Disciplinary Recommendations by OLAF between 2020 and 2024

Actions taken by national judicial authorities following OLAF's recommendations issued between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2024

Judiciary Recommendations by OLAF between 2020 and 2024

Actions taken by the competent authorities following OLAF's administrative recommendations issued between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2024

Administrative Recommendations by OLAF between 2020 and 2024

Impact of OLAF Financial Recommendations on the EU budget for the period 2022-2024

8

8

9

14

18

20

20

21

21

22

22

23

23

24

Learn more on the **Digital** **OLAF** Report

1 1000010 11010001 1001011
0 10110101 1010000 10111111
0 11010000 10111117 11010000



Communicating with OLAF

https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/index_en

Reporting fraud to OLAF

https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/olaf-and-you/report-fraud_en

Complaining about an OLAF investigation

https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/olaf-and-you/complaints-and-requests_en

Requesting information on OLAF

https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/contacts/general-contact-details_en

Media:

https://anti-fraud.ec.europa.eu/contacts/media-enquiries_en

Mailing address:

European Commission/European AntiFraud Office (OLAF)/1049 Brussels, Belgium

Address for visitors:

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)/Rue Joseph II 30/1000 Brussels, Belgium

The European Anti-Fraud Office is commonly known as OLAF, which is the acronym of its title in French, Office européen de lutte antifraude.

