



EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE

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OLAF contributes to the uncovering of a €700 million fraud scheme with EPPO

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has played a key role in supporting the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in its criminal investigation codenamed "Calypso", which targeted a complex scheme involving the fraudulent import of textiles, footwear, e-scooters, e-bikes, and other goods into the European Union. The investigation has already led to multiple raids across several EU Member States, with estimated damages amounting to approximately €700 million in evaded import duties and VAT.

OLAF carries out EU-wide administrative investigations by combining operational activities with advanced data analysis, digital tools, and systematic information exchange with customs authorities across EU Member States and third countries. This coordinated approach is further strengthened by the expertise provided by the EU industry.

By leveraging all these resources, OLAF is able to detect patterns of potential fraud and irregularities. It then alerts the relevant customs authorities so they can implement targeted controls, preventive measures, and corrective actions to disrupt fraudulent activities and safeguard the EU's financial interests.

OLAF conducted a comprehensive analysis of trade flows of e-bikes previously identified as suspected of being illegally introduced into EU. OLAF also conducted a detailed examination of sales activities on online platforms, marketing e-bike brands suspected of being linked to customs fraud.

This analytical work enabled OLAF to trace the distribution chain and identify multiple warehouses used to supply e-bikes to consumers across the EU. Coordinated inspections carried out by OLAF and customs authorities of EU Member States resulted in the seizure of a significant number of electric bicycles in several EU countries. For a number of consignments, links could be made with the Port of Piraeus in Greece.

OLAF was able to establish the amounts of import duties and VAT evaded in the EU to facilitate the administrative recovery and the adoption of possible precautionary measures. OLAF reported this modus operandi to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and provided extensive documentary evidence indicating possible criminal acts for further investigation.

"This case shows how administrative and criminal investigations can work hand in hand to protect the EU's financial interests," said Ville Itälä, Director-General of OLAF. "OLAF's ability to analyse trade patterns and detect fraud risks across borders was key to uncovering this network. It is a strong example of the results we can achieve through cooperation."

[Read the press release of the EPPO](#)

OLAF mission, mandate and competences:

OLAF's mission is to detect, investigate and stop fraud with EU funds.

OLAF fulfils its mission by:

- carrying out independent investigations into fraud and corruption involving EU funds, so as to ensure that all EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can create jobs and growth in Europe;
- contributing to strengthening citizens' trust in the EU Institutions by investigating serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU Institutions;
- developing a sound EU anti-fraud policy.

In its independent investigative function, OLAF can investigate matters relating to fraud, corruption and other offences affecting the EU financial interests concerning:

- all EU expenditure: the main spending categories are Structural Funds, agricultural policy and rural development funds, direct expenditure and external aid;
- some areas of EU revenue, mainly customs duties;
- suspicions of serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU institutions.

Once OLAF has completed its investigation, it is for the competent EU and national authorities to examine and decide on the follow-up of OLAF's recommendations. All persons concerned are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in a competent national or EU court of law.

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