

OLAF /09/02
Brussels, 3 March 2009

STEPS UP ANTI-FRAUD COMMUNICATION EFFORTS IN BULGARIA

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has recently stepped up its communication activities in Bulgaria through contributions to a seminar for journalists in Sofia and a feature about the fight against fraud with EU funds on public television. Both projects were supported by OLAF experts.

"It is clear that Bulgaria can only move out of the international spotlight with the full involvement and support of the population at large in the fight against fraud affecting EU funds", OLAF Director General, Franz-Hermann Bruener stated. "For this reason I would like to congratulate the Bulgarian Club of Journalists against Corruption, the Prosecutor General and the Bulgarian National Television station for their initiatives for which OLAF has happily given its support".

Pursuant to its aim of preventing fraud by informing the public, OLAF has further increased its communication activities targeted at Bulgarian audiences. OLAF experts and investigators participated in the TV feature "The Euro Funds Watchdog" by the award-winning Bulgarian journalist Reneta Nikolova, European Journalist of the Year 2007, which was broadcast this week on Bulgarian public television.

In addition, during a training seminar for journalists on fraud against EU-funds last week in Sofia held by the "[Club of Journalists against Corruption](#)" three OLAF representatives, the Spokesperson of the UK Serious Fraud Office and a member of the Italian Press Association discussed the issue of deterring fraud and corruption in Bulgaria by informing the public, with Bulgarian journalists. This discussion formed part of the activities of the OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators' Network ([OAFCN](#)) in co-operation with journalists' associations and took place in the framework of an agreement with the International Federation of Journalists ([IFJ](#)).

At the seminar, OLAF representatives emphasised that, as in all Member States, the prime responsibility for the fight against fraud and corruption is not with OLAF investigators, but with the national authorities. The OLAF representatives made it clear that overestimating the power of OLAF to investigate crime in Bulgaria would be a mistake and would not help in the fight against fraud and corruption. They stressed that Bulgarian citizens must realise that the fight against fraud and corruption in their country is a moral obligation for all citizens according to their respective levels of responsibility. This means that prosecutors must prosecute, judges must judge fairly and ordinary citizens must inform the authorities when they know of such crimes and say "NO" to fraud and corruption when so confronted.

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