

EN  
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Answer given by Mr Oettinger  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(8.4.2019)

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) carries out investigations independently from the EU institutions. OLAF's Investigative Policy Priorities (IPPs) are adopted yearly by the OLAF Director-General on the basis of Article 17(5) of Regulation No 883/2013 and are published on the European Commission website.<sup>1</sup> These IPPs are determined on the basis of the information resulting from OLAF's activities, taking into account *inter alia* feedback as well as key documents issued by stakeholders.

OLAF applies its IPPs in the context of its case selection procedure, which aims at assessing whether an investigation should be opened. The first step in OLAF's selection is to establish whether the Office is competent to investigate and whether there is sufficient suspicion. Once these elements are confirmed OLAF's selectors proceed to the analysis of the criteria of (i) proportionality, (ii) efficient use of investigative resources, and (iii) with regard to internal investigations, the institution, body, office or agency best placed to conduct them, based, in particular, on the nature of the facts, the actual or potential financial impact of the case, and the likelihood of any judicial follow-up. The IPPs are taken into account throughout the application of the above criteria. When a case falls within the scope of an investigation priority, this may tip the balance towards the opening of an investigation.

OLAF does not apply any financial thresholds in the selection procedure as in many cases it is not possible to estimate the financial impact at the selection stage. However, OLAF always considers whether the amounts at stake justify opening of an investigation in terms of proportionality and efficient use of resources.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/management-plan-olaf-2019\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/management-plan-olaf-2019_en.pdf)