

EU Public Prosecutor to fight financial fraud

- Will bring together European and national law enforcement efforts
- Will have exclusive and EU-wide jurisdiction
- Currently only national authorities can prosecute EU-fraud

Civil Liberties MEPs on Thursday gave the go ahead to setting up a European Public Prosecutor to fight fraud against EU funds and protect taxpayers' money.

The European Public Prosecutors Office (EPPO) will be in charge of investigating, prosecuting and bringing to justice those committing offences against the EU budget, such as fraud against the EU structural funds or large-scale cross-border VAT fraud.

The EPPO will allow for swift information exchange, coordinated police investigations, fast freezing and seizure of assets, as well as arrests of suspects across borders. It will work closely with and complement the EU criminal justice agency Eurojust and the EU anti-fraud investigation office OLAF.

Currently, only national authorities can investigate and prosecute EU-related fraud, but their jurisdiction ends at their national borders. OLAF, Eurojust and Europol do not have and cannot be given the mandate to conduct criminal investigations against fraud.

The Civil Liberties Committee gave its consent to the proposal to establish the European Public Prosecutors Office by 40 votes to 5, with 2 abstentions.

Quote

Parliament's rapporteur [Barbara Matera \(EPP, IT\)](#) said: "It is time for the EU to ensure effective coordination of the investigation and prosecution of fraud against EU funds. Establishing a European Public Prosecutor's Office will add value to the European integration process, because it will result in more prosecutions of crimes affecting the Union's financial interests. The little control that the Union has over the way in which EU funds are spent in member states has led to a misuse of those funds, not least because they have failed to prosecute these crimes properly. The deterrent effect that EPPO will have will also enhance the perception that citizens have of the EU as a whole."

Next steps

The full house will vote on the proposal to establish the EPPO in Strasbourg on Thursday 5 October.

Parliament must give its consent before the Council can formally adopt the regulation on the EPPO. It is expected to take at least three years before the EPPO can begin its work.

Quick facts

The EPPO will be set up in *enhanced cooperation* among 20 member states: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Spain. Other member states may choose to join at any time.

The EPPO central office will be based in Luxembourg, with a chief prosecutor and prosecutors from all participating countries. In addition, there will be delegated prosecutors located nationally in each member state.

The list of serious crimes that fall under the jurisdiction of the EPPO could be extended in the future to include, for example, terrorism.

Since 2014, MEPs have pushed through several resolutions to establish the EPPO and have stressed the importance of ensuring the independence of its prosecutors.

Further information

[Press release from the Council on the agreement to establish the EPPO \(08.06.2017\)](#)
[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)

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