Fraud and corruption

Fraud and corruption pose serious threats to the security and the financial interests of the European Union (EU). Protecting these interests is a priority for the EU institutions, both to put taxpayers' money to best use, and to tackle organised crime and terrorism, for which corruption provides a fertile breeding ground.

The legal basis for combating fraud and any other illegal activities affecting the EU's financial interests is Article 325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which tasks the EU itself and its member countries with protecting the EU's budget.

At EU level, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF):

- conducts independent administrative investigations into fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity involving EU funds or revenue, to ensure that EU taxpayers' money reaches projects that can help create jobs and promote growth in Europe
- investigates serious misconduct by EU staff and members of the EU institutions, thus helping to strengthen public trust in those institutions
- develops EU anti-fraud policies in its capacity as a Commission service.

Once the European Public Prosecutor's Office has been set up in line with Regulation 2017/1939, it will be the first EU body entitled to conduct criminal investigations and to prosecute fraud and corruption affecting the EU's financial interests.

The European Commission, through its Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) tackles corruption at both EU and international level. Corruption creates business uncertainty, lowers investment levels and prevents the single market from operating smoothly. Most relevantly, it undermines trust in governments, public institutions and democracy in general.

The EU institutions aim to:

- streamline and modernise the set of legal rules impacting on corruption
- monitor developments in efforts to combat corruption in EU countries as part of the European Semester
- support the implementation of national anti-corruption measures through funding, technical assistance and experience-sharing.

Article 83(1) TFEU recognises corruption as a ‘euro-crime’, listing it among particularly serious crimes with a cross-border dimension.
Fraud and corruption - general rules
Fraud against EU funds
Fraud against EU revenue
Taxes
Customs
Counterfeiting & fraud
Corruption
Anti-fraud offices

See also:
Institutional affairs
Budget