



OLAF Supervisory Committee

## **Opinion No. 2/2007**

### **OLAF's Preliminary Draft Budget for 2008**

Brussels, 25 April 2007



## OLAF Supervisory Committee

The OLAF Supervisory Committee (SC) has discussed in its meetings of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 “OLAF’s Preliminary Draft Budget for the European Anti-Fraud Office for 2008” and adopted the following opinion:

### **a. Human resources management and investigation work**

As regards the question of temporary agents, the SC welcomes the agreement recently reached with DG Admin and the staff representatives anticipating a screening procedure to be conducted to award an extension for an unlimited period of the temporary agents recruited before 1 February 2006. The agreement has been pivotal in ensuring continuity and maintenance of OLAF in-house expertise and it is expected to improve the commitment of staff to OLAF objectives and the effectiveness of OLAF as a whole.

In order to fully benefit from the positive outcome of the agreement, the SC’s view is that a robust strategy in human resources management is now urgently needed. OLAF should ensure that human resources management (and training) are fully adapted to the needs of the organisation, and that the allocation of resources between units reflects the priority needs. Generally, human resources management should be seen as the key investigation support function to strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the investigation work. Developing and maintaining a skilled, diverse and capable investigative staff is the only way to improve the efficiency and quality of OLAF services and must be considered to be the principal source of advantage for OLAF overall strategy.

Consequently, the SC believes that having a well-defined human resources strategy will help the Office to maximise the use of existing resources in the investigation area to better manage the future workload and to organise the investigative teams accordingly. This includes as a minimum, an advance planning of short-and medium term priority needs (based on strategic analysis), overview of the existing resources and capabilities as well as identification of the areas where improvement is needed. An important area in this respect is the provision of adequate and continuous training for investigators, which is a key factor in increasing motivation and job satisfaction.

**Recommendation:** OLAF to prepare a human resources strategy to address short - and medium-term human resources matters (needs assessment, recruitment, training, mobility and career development). A robust approach to human resources management will improve the operational effectiveness.

### **b. Allocation of resources in the support of investigation work**

OLAF is requesting 9 additional AD posts, of which two would be allocated to operational units and the remaining to different administrative and policy tasks. The SC supports the allocation of resources to strengthen OLAF’s investigatory function but questions the need, without further evidence of pressing need, for further resources to supplement administrative and policy areas which are not directly concerned in investigation activities, particularly since many OLAF investigation teams are currently understaffed in relation to the size of their workload.



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Secondly, the SC is aware that OLAF has not been able to fill the number of posts requested from the budgetary authorities in previous years, and that there are currently a large number of posts unoccupied. As a priority, OLAF management should undertake measures to fill those vacant posts before any additional posts are requested.

In the recent structural reorganisation, OLAF accorded clear priority to investigation work. If there is a pressing need for OLAF to supplement its resources in certain areas of non-operational work, management should, as an alternative, consider measures such as transfers, though not, of course, from operational areas, to deploy resources in these areas.

**Recommendation:** As a priority new posts should be allocated to OLAF operational work and non-operational posts should be filled by internal transfers. This would reinforce the Office's activities on its investigative function.

### **c. Secretariat staff**

OLAF's Director General has given the SC a firm and binding commitment to put at its disposal all the human and financial resources the SC requires in order to comply with its legal mandate and its work programme. The SC would like OLAF to make a provision in the 2008 Budget for eight Secretariat staff using the footnote method to earmark these posts specifically for the Secretariat as was done in the past. This would enable the SC to fulfil its legal mandate in full independence.

**Recommendation:** OLAF to add a footnote to the establishment plan concerning the earmarking of the eight staff members of the Secretariat

### **d. Conclusion**

The SC supports OLAF's budget proposal for 2008 with the proviso that the above recommendations be taken into consideration.