

# Building Trust

## Strengthening the Protection of EU Funds through Cooperation, Governance and Smart Tools

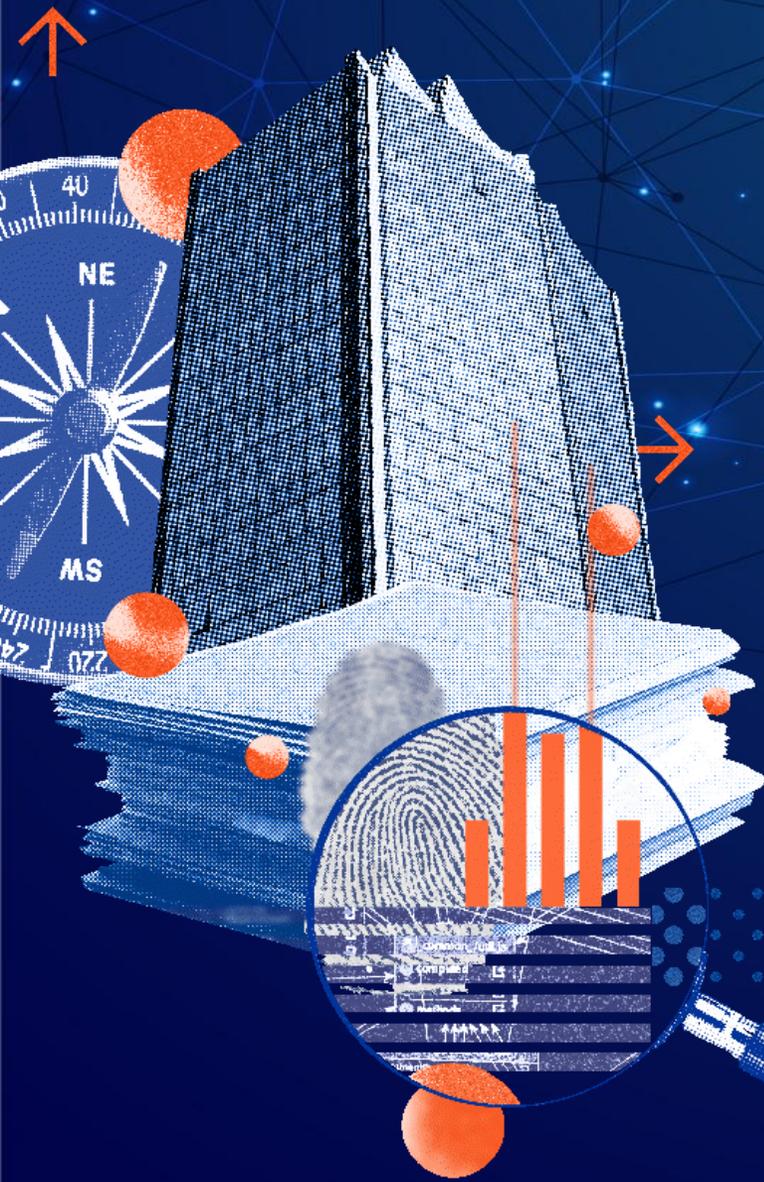
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OLAF, Unit C1 Anti-corruption, Anti-fraud Strategy and Analysis

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# Mission and activities



Any illegal activity  
against EU financial  
interests  
(EU taxpayers'  
interests)

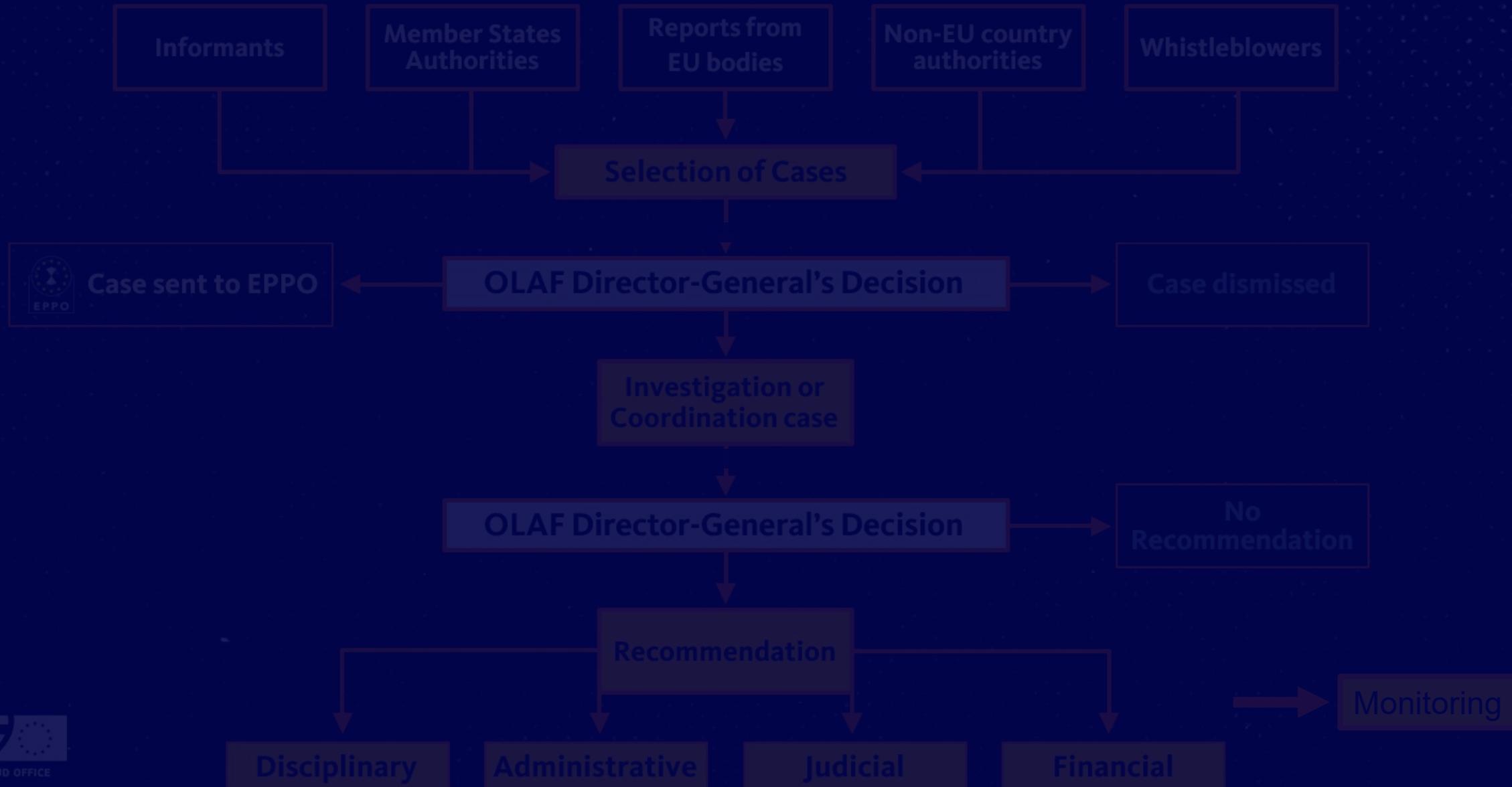
Fraud, Irregularities  
and Corruption

Detect  
Investigate  
Protect

Develop a sound EU  
Anti-fraud Policy

Investigate serious  
wrongdoing of EU  
staff

# Investigative cycle



# OLAF investigative performance in 2024

**246**  
Cases  
concluded



**230**   
Investigations  
opened

**1138**  
Selections made



**301** Recommendations

**188** Financial recommendations

**60** Administrative recommendations

**30** Judicial recommendations

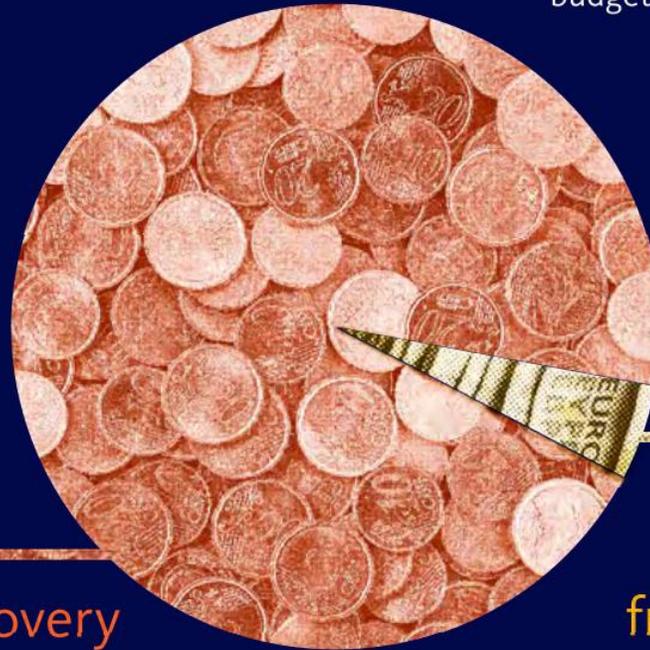
**23** Disciplinary recommendations

# Financial recommendations

## Investigative activity

OLAF had a strong investigative performance in 2024, which saw analysts and investigators work across the EU and beyond to help detect and prevent fraud and protect the EU budget, institutions and citizens.

**€871.5 million**  
recommended for recovery



**€43.5 million**  
recommended  
to be prevented  
from being unduly spent

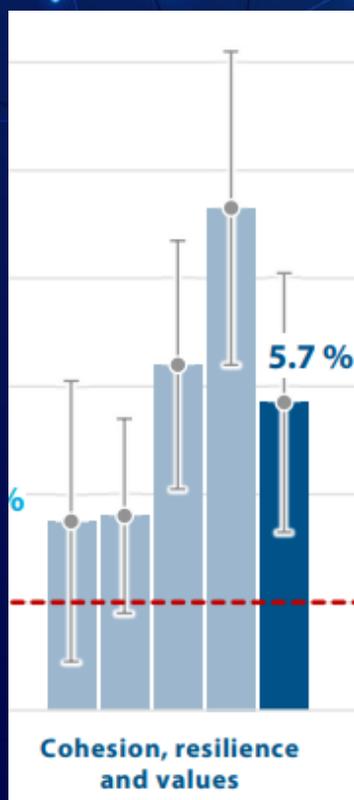
# Unit C1 – Anti-Corruption, Anti-Fraud Strategy and Analysis

- Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) & National Anti-Fraud Strategies (NAFS)
- Anti-fraud policy design, incl MFF & RRF
- Fraud prevention
- Strategic analysis and advice
- Irregularity Management System (IMS)
- Advisory Committee for the coordination of fraud prevention (COCOLAF)
- Annual Report on the Protection of the Union's Financial Interests ('PIF Report')

# Challenges ahead in the fight against fraud



# The magnitude of the challenge (2024 data)



Maritime and fisheries programmes **48**

Regional and urban development programmes **478**

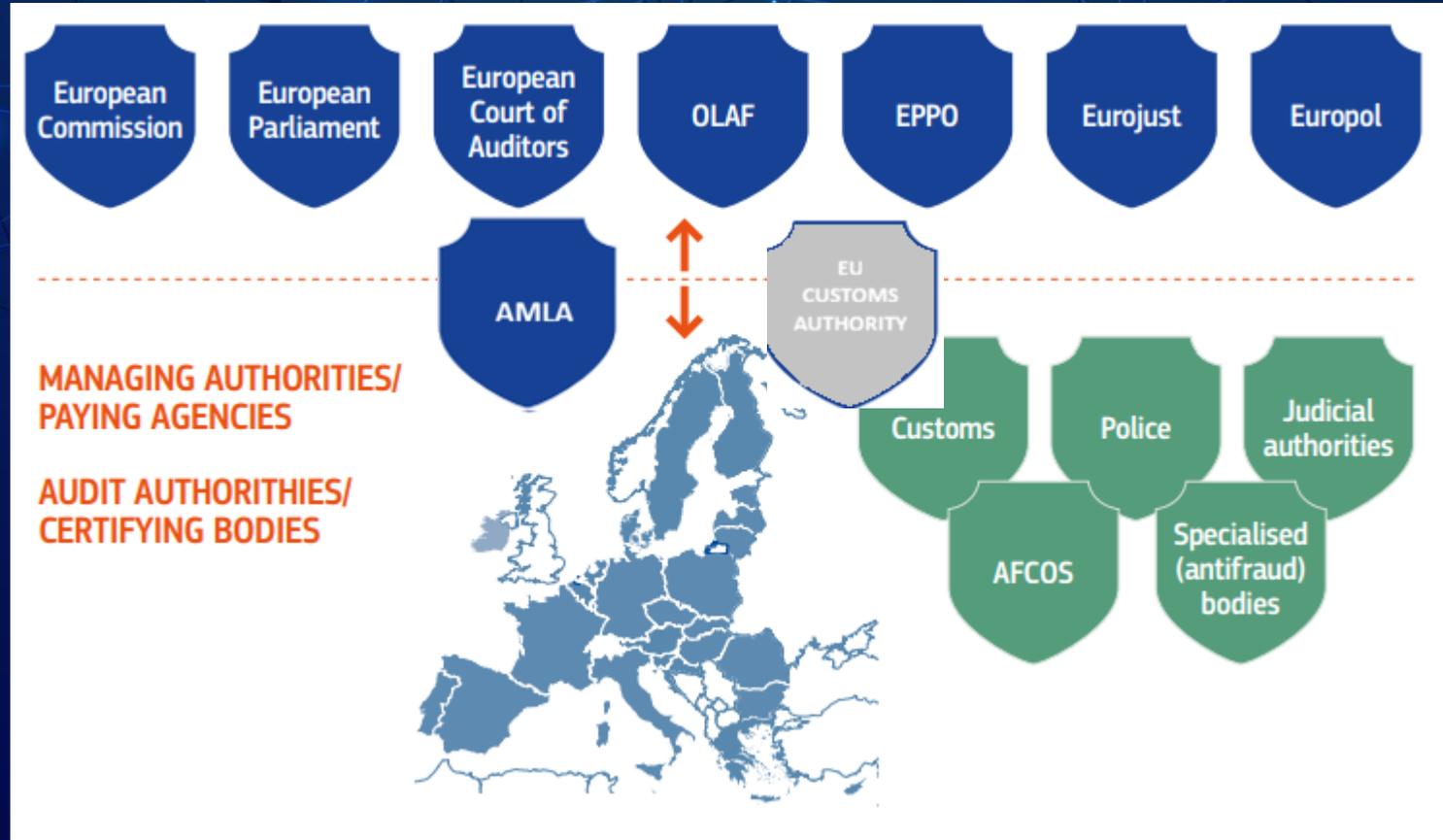
Employment, social cohesion, inclusion and values programmes **158**

**Est. Damage  $\approx$  2.6 billion**

2014-2020  
**FDR: 0.22% of payments**  
**N° of cases: 1 275**

**IDR: 0.76% of payments**  
**N° of cases: 14 091**

# THE EU anti-fraud architecture (expanded)



# Review of the EU anti-fraud architecture

- Launched in July 2025
- Complementary to the legislative package proposal MFF 2028-2034
- Main reflection lines:
  - Governance (including reporting)
  - Coordination and cooperation
  - Enhancing results, in particular via recovery
  - Increased use of AI tools

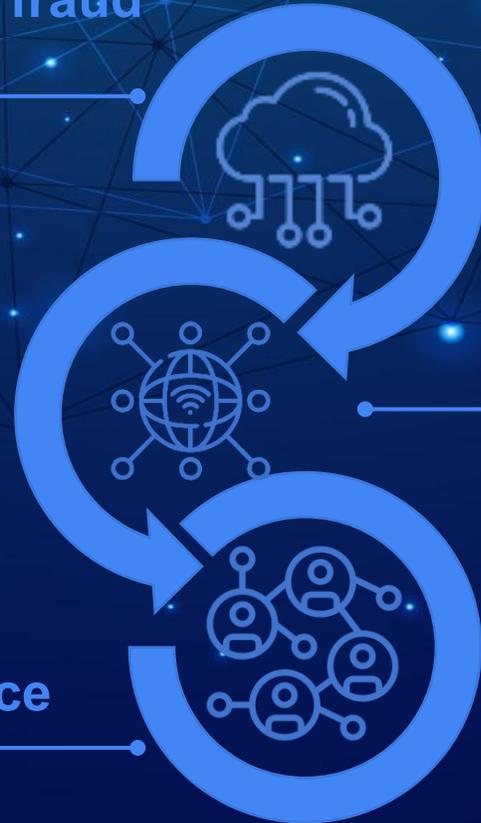
# 3 pillars of the fight against fraud

## Availability of data on fraud and irregularities

- Mandatory reporting via IMS
- Access to data on recipients and transactions

## Anti-fraud governance

- National antifraud strategies



## Boost to digitalisation

- Use of interoperable IT tools and innovative technologies
- Interoperability between nationals and EU systems

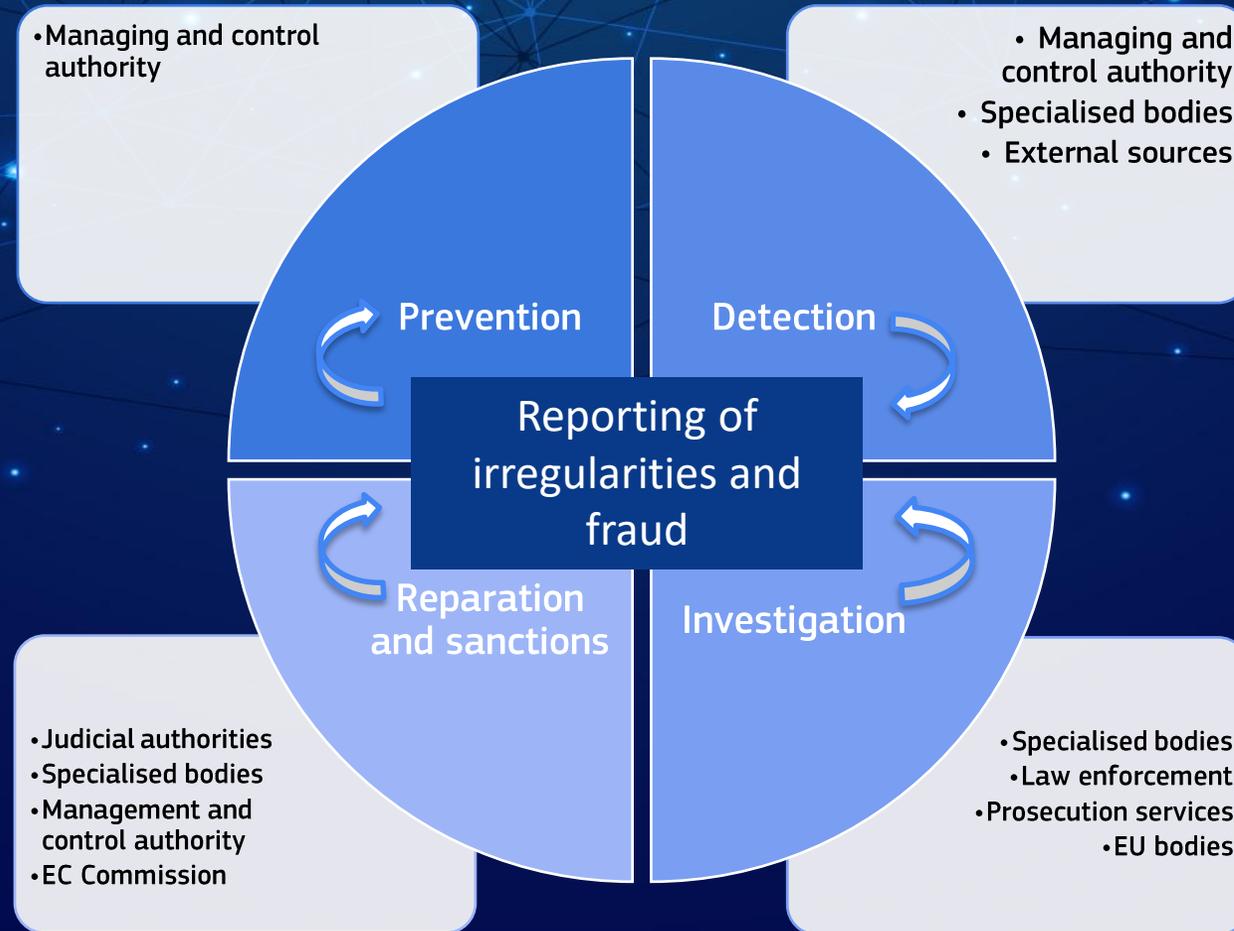
# Governance and cooperation – the national level

- Easier in smaller Member States
- National level mirrors the challenges and needs of the EU level
- Close cooperation with the EU level is implied and absolutely necessary for cross-border fraud and irregularities

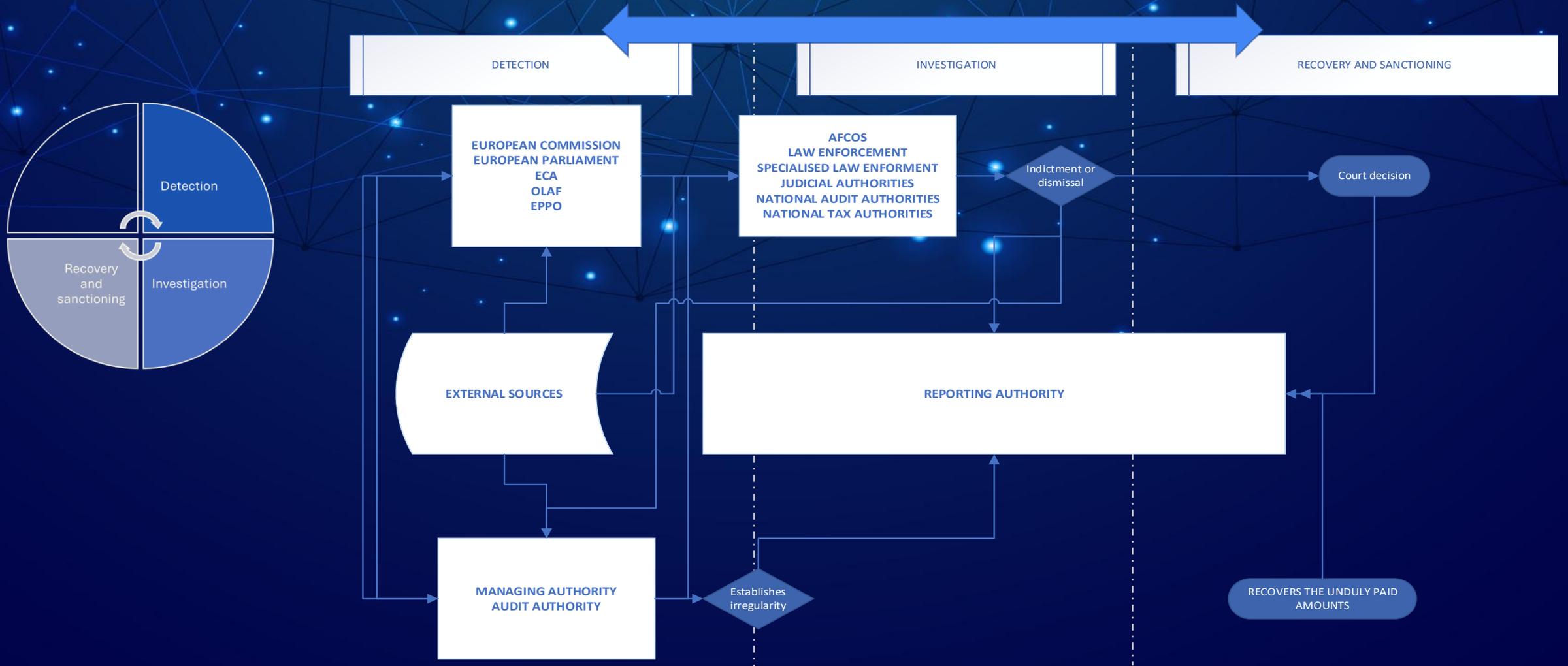
# Governance and cooperation – National anti-fraud strategies

- Based on solid fraud risk assessment (threat vs weakness – likelihood and impact to score)
  - Participation from external experts
  - Risks linked to new technologies
- Skill gap assessment
- Defining the roles
- Addressing communication needs (within the Member State and with the EU level)
- Linking objectives to identified risks across all stages of the anti-fraud cycle
  - Digitalisation of the fight against fraud
- Action plan with actions linked to objectives
- Evaluation

# The anti-fraud cycle



# Reporting of irregularities and fraud as a system's health-check



# The core elements of prevention



- Lessons learnt
  - From/to law enforcement
  - From/to auditors
  - From analysis of past irregularities and fraud
- Awareness raising
  - Training
  - Update red flags register
- Fraud risk assessment
- Availability of data
  - IT tools
  - Data quality

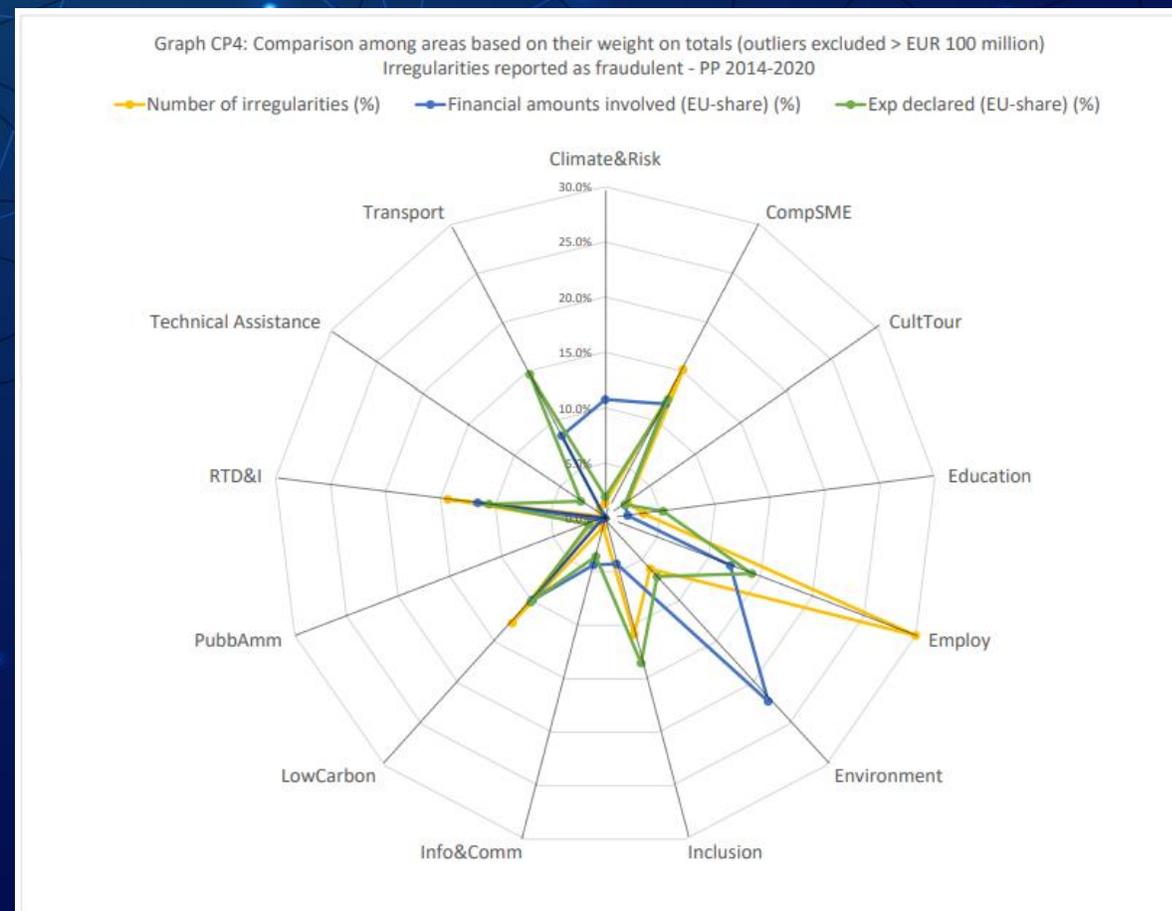
# Are we ready for the new threats?

Categories of irregularities	Irregularities reported as fraudulent					Irregularities not reported as fraudulent		
	Financial amounts (EU-share)					Financial amounts (EU-share)		
	N	EUR	EUR/avg	FFL %	FAL %	N	EUR	EUR/avg
Incorrect, missing, false or falsified supporting documents	517	186,537,593	360,808	22	39	1,870	293,058,556	156,716
Infringement of contract provisions/rules	295	111,333,905	377,403	6	14	4,442	702,708,359	158,196
Infringement of public procurement rules	149	152,586,175	1,024,068	3	11	4,494	1,176,063,787	261,696
Ethics and integrity	127	136,594,556	1,075,548	42	76	172	43,357,155	252,076
Eligibility / Legitimacy of expenditure/measure	30	41,418,232	1,380,608	3	20	1,018	167,561,941	164,599
Infringements concerning the request	124	105,805,264	853,268	35	61	226	68,948,839	305,083
Violations/breaches by the operator	71	24,175,726	340,503	15	20	405	95,023,085	234,625
Incorrect, absent, falsified accounts	76	17,798,366	234,189	10	16	661	93,217,014	141,024
Product, species and/or land	48	10,306,658	214,722	14	21	284	39,363,131	138,603
Multiple financing	15	3,113,138	207,543	31	55	33	2,564,852	77,723
Bankruptcy	13	3,953,328	304,102	11	16	104	20,028,199	192,579
State aid	10	2,053,020	205,302	4	6	275	30,125,347	109,547
Movement	1	4,612	4,612	5	0	20	1,517,630	75,882
Other	179	256,176,329	1,431,153	11	33	1,396	522,297,965	374,139
blank	20	5,762,995	288,150	7	17	283	28,070,447	99,189
<b>Total number of irregularities EU 27 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>833,222,241</b>	<b>675,221</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13,669</b>	<b>2,866,164,049</b>	<b>209,684</b>

- Detection methods have not significantly changed
- Low impact of risk analysis
- Cases opened on the basis of tips or whistleblowers lead to significant results but remained 'limited'
- Slow definition of cases of suspected fraud
  - 17% dismissed
  - 15% established

## Areas at risk

- Investments in the green transition
- Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (RTD&I)
- Funding to promote sustainable transport
- Promotion of employment
- Investments for the digitalisation
- Promotion of social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination



# The threat actors

- The eclipse of the 'occasional' fraudster and the rise of 'organised packs'
- The fraud 'pusher' – a new profession?
- Matching the threat of the cyber-lone-wolves

# Conclusions

- Trust in the European project is more necessary than ever and more at risk than ever
- Fraud against the EU budget undermines this trust
- Trust is also the 'glue' for a complex and articulated architecture
- The launched review aims at improving the cooperation between the actors and the efficiency and effectiveness of the system
- Key role of technology
- Watch out for the new threat actors



**OLAF** Report  
**2024**



# THANK YOU!

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- More about OLAF:
- Go to our website: [olaf.europa.eu](https://olaf.europa.eu)
- Follow us on Twitter: @EUAntiFraud
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