

# European Public Prosecutor's Office: The Netherlands becomes 21st country to join common efforts to protect EU budget against fraud

Today, the European Commission confirmed the Netherlands as the 21<sup>st</sup> EU-Member State to join the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPP0) which will play a key role in fighting crimes against the EU budget such as fraud, corruption, money laundering or serious cross-border VAT fraud above €10 million. It will be operational by the end of 2020 in all participating Member States.

Commissioner for Justice, Gender Equality and Consumers, Vera **Jourová**, said: *"Crime knows no borders, therefore we have to work together to fight it. I welcome the Netherlands today as a new member of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The more EU countries join, the broader the reach of the EPP0, and the more money can be recovered. This is why I urge all remaining Member States to join this essential network in the fight against fraud and corruption, so that we can ensure that every cent of the EU budget is spent to the benefit of our citizens."*

Member States that have not yet chosen to participate in the European Public Prosecutor's Office can join at any time after the adoption of the Regulation, if they wish to do so. On 14 June 2018, **Malta** notified the Commission of its intention to participate. The Commission is examining this notification in line with the procedure set out in Article 331 TFEU and is expected to take a decision shortly. The following EU countries are already participating to the EPP0: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Slovenia.

## **Composition of the EPP0 Selection Panel**

Today the Commission has also proposed to the Council of the European Union a list of candidates for the EPP0's Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will consist of twelve members, expected to take up their function in October 2018. The candidates selected will all have worked as former members of the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors, as national members of Eurojust, members of national supreme courts or as high level prosecutors and lawyers. The Commission's selection is based on geographical balance, gender balance and due representation of the legal systems of the Member States participating in the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The Selection Panel will be responsible for drawing up a shortlist of candidates for the position of European Chief Prosecutor, assessing the qualifications of candidates before the appointment by the Council.

## **Background**

Every year at least €50 billion of revenue from VAT is lost from national budgets all over Europe through cross-border fraud. This is why, in 2013, the Commission proposed, under the leadership of former Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental rights and Citizenship Viviane Reding, to set up a European Public Prosecutor's Office. This was then [taken forward in June 2017 by 20 Member States](#) through the enhanced cooperation mechanism.

The EPP0 will ensure that crimes affecting the EU budget – including fraud, corruption, money laundering and cross-border VAT fraud – can be more effectively and swiftly investigated across the EU. It will overcome the current shortcomings and tackle fraud involving EU funds of over €10,000 as well as complex cross-border VAT fraud cases, involving damage above €10 million. To do so, the EPP0 will work hand in hand with national law enforcement authorities and closely cooperate with other EU bodies, such as Eurojust and Europol. [In May 2018, the Commission proposed new rules for the European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\) to become a close partner of the European Public Prosecutor's Office as well.](#)

The Commission decision on the Netherlands' participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office will become applicable 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal.

#### **EPP0 Structure:**



#### **For more information**

[MEMO: Frequently Asked Questions on the European Public Prosecutor's Office](#)

[Infographic on enhanced cooperation](#)

[Commission Decision confirming the participation of the Netherlands in the enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the EPP0](#)

[Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision appointing the members of the panel provided for in Art.14\(3\) of Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1939](#)

[Press release: Commission proposes new rules for OLAF as a close partner of the European Public Prosecutor's Office](#)

Website: [European Public Prosecutor's Office](#)