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The European Public Prosecutor's Office's 2025 Annual Report: growth, gaps and the path forward

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Tuesday, April 21st, 2026

Last month, the European Chief Prosecutor of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), Laura Codruța Kövesi, [presented the 2025 EPPO Annual Report](#) to the European Parliament's budgetary control and civil liberties committees. This is the fifth report since the EPPO became operational in June 2021, and it once again outlines several notable findings.

First, the report points to the rising of financial crime, such as VAT fraud, corruption, and money laundering, in the European Union (EU). The estimated damage to the [EU's financial interests](#) under investigation has nearly doubled, rising from €24,8 billion in 2024 to €48,7 billion in 2025. Similarly, the number of new investigations opened annually has grown by 35%, from 1,504 in 2024 to 2,030 in 2025. According to the report, this increase is largely due to the improved cooperation between the EPPO and national authorities, combined with the EPPO's focus on tackling criminal organisations active in non-procurement expenditure and revenue fraud (VAT and customs). This shows the scale of unseen financial crime across the EU, and suggests the full picture is yet unknown: the harder the EPPO works, the more there is to prosecute.

The picture is more positive when it comes to the proportion of cross-border investigations. These offences, which are committed on the territory of several countries, or which cause damage to several countries, have remained stable at 27%. This suggests that, while the total number of investigations has increased, the share of cross-border cases has not. However, cross-border crime remains persistent, with more than a quarter of all cases involving multiple countries and increasingly intertwined with complex schemes targeting the EU's financial interests. This is significant, because cross-border crime, is often more complex, harder to detect and prosecute, and typically involves larger, more sophisticated schemes.

As the annual report highlights, these trends point to a more fundamental challenge related to the application of the [PIF Directive](#)—the EU's law on setting standards of criminal offences to fight fraud, upon which the EPPO exercises its competence. Criminal groups still perceive [offences affecting the EU's financial interest](#) as an accessible, fast and comparatively low risk sources of significant profits, and the effective prosecution of these offences is undermined by the highly uneven implementation of the Directive across Member States. This not only weakens coherent

enforcement, but also creates opportunities for forum shopping, reinforcing the perception among offenders that financial crime is not uniformly sanctioned across the Union.

Moreover, the report shows that notifications to the EPPO from national authorities have grown by 20%, while those from EU institutions, bodies, organisations, and agencies (IBOAs) remained low (from 113 to 143), despite their central role in combating financial crime. This broader shortfall in reporting by EU bodies is particularly concerning given the large amounts of expenses misuse within the European Parliament, as uncovered by [Follow the Money](#). This may reflect a broader structural constraint, where members of implicated institutions actively hinder effective inter-institutional cooperation.

That said, [OLAF's own annual report](#), published on Monday, suggests a more substantial operational relationship with the EPPO than these figures alone might imply. OLAF's cooperation with the EPPO appears to have increased, with the number of cases transmitted rising from 79 in 2024 to 93 in 2025, out of which 59% resulted in the opening of an EPPO investigation. From a purely quantitative perspective, cooperation between both actors therefore appears stronger than the EPPO reports alone suggests. However, the EPPO does not publish equally granular information on this specific cooperation, making it difficult to assess the relationship from the EPPO's side.

A closer look at reporting sources reinforces this uneven picture. In 2024, private parties accounted for the majority of reports (70%), while 2025 saw a notable increase in reports from national authorities. This shift points to improved cooperation among Member States and growing public awareness of the EPPO's role, as well as high expectations among citizens.

The report once again underlines the EPPO's added value of prosecuting financial crime affecting the EU's financial interests at EU level. But it has the potential to be far more effective. Over the past two years, [Transparency International EU](#) has examined both good practices and challenges IBOAs face when tackling corruption and money laundering cases, finding that several persistent barriers continue to undermine effective cooperation and data sharing. These include tensions between law enforcement imperatives and data privacy requirements, as well as language barriers, political constraints, and lack of mutual trust, all of which can delay or even obstruct cooperation.

The EU's [ongoing Anti-Fraud Architecture \(AFA\)](#) review is a key opportunity, not only for the EPPO, but also for other AFA actors, to advance a more effective, better coordinated, and truly interoperable EU system for tackling cross-border crime and safeguarding the Union's financial interests. Priorities include clarification of mandates and obligations under their respective regulations and real-time, interoperable data sharing. This exercise should be accompanied by appropriate legislative proposals to streamline and enhance the cooperation between the EU's enforcement agencies, including the EPPO, the European Anti-Fraud Agency (OLAF) and Europol. The Commission should strengthen Europol's critical partnership with the EPPO,

especially in the area of data analysis.

At the same time, the process for the recovery of EU funds should be reinforced by ensuring that OLAF's recommendations and the EPPO's powers to freeze assets are effectively followed up, ultimately leading to improved recovery rates and stronger protection of the Union's financial interests.

In light of these considerations, and as underlined by both the European Parliament and the Commission during the [adoption](#) of the [Anti-Corruption Directive](#), corruption undermines citizens' trust in European institutions. Strengthening and clarifying cooperation between IBOAs would not only enhance the effectiveness of efforts to combat corruption and crimes affecting the EU budget but also demonstrate the Union's firm commitment to safeguarding its financial interests and restoring public confidence. This objective is now reinforced by the Directive's introduction of a harmonised framework, which standardises the definitions of corruption offences across the Union. Member States will be required to transpose the Directive into national law within 24 months.

However, the effectiveness of this harmonised legal framework ultimately depends on the capacity of EU-level enforcement bodies to act upon it. In this regard, the role and institutional positioning of the EPPO become particularly significant. In her [parliamentary presentation](#), Laura Codruța Kövesi emphasised that many of the existing shortcomings would “disappear if the EPPO would be considered as an institution,” arguing for its recognition as part of the judiciary.

This statement lays bare a fundamental flaw in how the EPPO is currently positioned within the EU Anti-Fraud framework: formally recognising the EPPO as an institution would provide the legal and budgetary clarity it needs to fully deliver on its mandate.

At a time when citizens' trust in the European institutions faces challenges, we call on EU lawmakers to take the EPPO to the next level, thereby consolidating its status, reinforcing its capacities and fully acknowledging its central role in upholding the rule of law and protecting the Union's budget.

Later this year, on 1 November, [Andrés Ritter](#) will succeed Laura Codruța Kövesi as the new European Chief Prosecutor of the EPPO. He is expected to build on his [predecessor's legacy](#), continuing EPPO's strong focus on high standards of independence, cross-border cooperation and effective enforcement by ensuring that the office remains a key actor in protecting the EU's budget. The EPPO has already proven that the EU's budget is better safeguarded with a dedicated, independent prosecutorial body. It is now time to ensure it is equipped with a solid legal framework to properly deliver on its mandate.

Read our analysis from last year [here](#).

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