REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

“PROTECTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION’S FINANCIAL INTERESTS” DIRECTORATE (AFCOS)

BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL STUDIES

"Supporting young scientists and PhD Students 2017" Programme

“We have an obligation towards EU taxpayers to get the most out of the EU budget. For this, we must lead by example in ensuring that EU money reaches the right beneficiaries and is spent on purposes for which it is intended.”

INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE ON THE PROTECTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION’S AND BULGARIA’S FINANCIAL INTERESTS FROM IRREGULARITIES AND FRAUD

Project

"Raising the standard of living in Bulgaria by preventing and combating irregularities and fraud affecting the financial interests of the European Union and Republic of Bulgaria".

What can we do to change the world we live in?

The irregularities and the frauds with funds from the EU budget and the budget Republic of Bulgaria (co-financing) causes detrimental effect on the implementation of the EU's development policies.

Competent to investigate such acts are the anti-fraud coordination services (AFCOS), the national law enforcement bodies, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Public Prosecutor's office (EEPO).

Reports on irregularity/fraud can be sent by any natural or legal person.

COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Directorate "Protection of the European Union Financial Interests" (AFCOS) is a specialized structure within the Ministry of Interior, which carriers out control, information and coordination activities aimed at the protection of the European Union's financial interests.

AFCOS DIRECTORATE:

- is the **national contact point with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)** and the competent authorities in the field of protection of the EU financial interests within the EU Member States and other countries;
- carries out the **exchange of information with OLAF**, including information of operational nature, aimed at the protection of the European Union financial interests;
- carries out the **operational cooperation with OLAF in the course of conduct of investigations on the territory of Republic of Bulgaria;**
- **receives alerts on irregularities, affecting the financial interests of the European Union**, and performs analysis, assessment and checks with regard to the authenticity of the allegations;
- **carries out administrative investigations** aimed at identification of the irregularities affecting the financial interests of the European Union;
- is responsible at national level for **reporting to the European Commission of irregularities** affecting the general EU budget;
- **controls the procedures for administration of irregularities** and carries out checks aimed at ensuring compliance with the legal provisions;
- **assists the Minister of Interior** in the implementation of the state policy on protection of the financial interests of the European Union;

After receiving an irregularity alert, affecting the financial interests of the European Union, AFCOS Directorate:

- 1. requests information and documents from state and local authorities as well as from legal entities, natural persons and organizations;
- 2. invites and takes statements from persons concerned in order to identify irregularities;
- 3. conducts on-the-spot checks and/or examines documents in order to identify irregularities;
- 4. requests assistance from other structures of the Ministry of Interior, other state authorities, organizations, legal entities and individuals, as well as from OLAF.

FRAUD is a deliberate act of deception intended for gaining personal benefit or causing a detriment to another party.

IRREGULARITY is an act which doesn't comply with EU rules and which has a potentially negative impact on EU financial interests, but which may be the result of genuine errors committed both by beneficiaries claiming funds and by the authorities responsible for making payments. If an irregularity is committed deliberately, however, it's fraud.

AFCOS Directorate can investigate allegations concerning:

- irregularities with a potentially negative impact for EU public funds

HOW TO REPORT AN IRREGULARITY?

- via regular post to the address of the AFCOS Directorate: Bulgaria, Sofia, "Sveta Nedelya" sq. № 6;
- at the premises of AFCOS Directorate - Sofia, "Sveta Nedelya" sq. № 6;
- you can contact us anonymously and without any further formalities via e-mail address: afcosbg@mvr.bg .

The **irregularity alert** should contain as accurate detailed information about the infringement appearing in the course of implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and should be supported with evidence.

Any person, who has submitted an irregularity alert is protected of dismissal or any other negative effect.

AFCOS Directorate
Sofia 1000, "Sveta Nedelya"sq. № 6
tel. (+359) 2 940 14 45
e-mail: afcosbg@mvr.bg

EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF)

The **European Anti Fraud Office** (commonly known as **OLAF**, from the French: *Office européen de lutte antifraude*) is a general directorate mandated by the European Commission with protecting the financial interests of the European Union. OLAF investigates fraud, corruption and serious misconduct within the European Institutions and develops anti-fraud policy for the European Commission.

Reports/Alerts on irregularities and fraud with EU funds can be sent to OLAF using all 24 official languages of the Union on the web page: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-fraud/home_en. The reports/signals could be anonymous.

Irregularity or fraud reports can be sent using the following address: *European Commission, European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) 1049, Brussels, Belgium.*