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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

of the

Evaluation of the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy

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Evaluation Report: the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)

Executive Summary

This evaluation assesses the implementation of the CAFS for 2011-2018 against its objectives. The criteria applied are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. The evaluation is designed to identify whether the CAFS needs updating to take account of changes in anti-fraud legislation, forms of fraud or technological developments.

The CAFS has met its main objectives, which are:

1. Appropriate anti-fraud provisions in Commission proposals on spending programmes under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020;
2. Development and implementation of anti-fraud strategies within the Commission Services¹;
3. Revision of public procurement directives.

The evaluation's main conclusions are listed below:

Relevance

The evaluation shows that the CAFS objectives remain relevant to a changing EU anti-fraud legal and policy landscape, while their implementation continues to enhance cooperation between the Commission Services. However, the evaluation also points out that the Strategy could integrate the revenue side of the EU budget in a more comprehensive manner.

Effectiveness

The implementation of the CAFS' main objectives and the variety of anti-fraud measures substantially contributed to setting forth a heightened fraud prevention and detection framework: e.g. in-house training (in particular on ethics and integrity), the Early Detection and Exclusion System, anti-fraud legislative provisions, cooperation with national authorities and the adoption of Regulation 883/2013.

The evaluation stresses that the sheer complexity of fraud makes it hard for stakeholders to detect. The CAFS had limited effect on administrative and judicial sanctions and recoveries' effectiveness. Stakeholders taking part in the evaluation stress the need to develop data analysis to support fraud prevention and detection.

The evaluation revealed that OLAF's coordinating role contributed to the development of Commission Services' anti-fraud strategies. Stakeholders also voiced interest for a stronger role for OLAF.

¹ References to Commission Services cover all Commission Directorates-General and Services, including the Commission's administrative offices, plus the executive agencies.

Coherence

The assessment of **internal coherence** was positive given the seamless continuum between the CAFS and the Commission Services' anti-fraud strategies. Synchronised measures between the CAFS communication and the associated action plan were judged to be complementary.

On **external coherence**, the CAFS's general and cross-cutting nature ensures that no other Commission policy contradicts the objectives set in the CAFS. However, the evaluation shows that there is not always a clear link between the CAFS and other policy areas. Stakeholders underlined the need for the updated CAFS to adapt to the legislative developments (e.g. the European Public Prosecutor's Office).

Efficiency

The evaluation shows that the CAFS's implementation added no layers of administration to the Commission. However, some stakeholders thought there was not enough staff dealing with anti-fraud matters.

Overall assessment

The CAFS remains a relevant and effective policy instrument with a broad scope; it is central to the Commission's anti-fraud policy, designed to protect the EU Budget. It needs to adapt to a changing environment: new fraud trends are emerging, the context in which EU funds are spent is changing and new IT tools are being developed. Most of the stakeholders agreed that an updated CAFS will meet the challenges raised by the evaluation's findings more satisfactorily.