

# Joint Statement by Commissioners Oettinger and Jourová on the European Parliament's consent to establishing the European Public Prosecutor's Office

We welcome today's vote of the European Parliament, giving its green light to the creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office. A vast majority of Members of the European Parliament decided to endorse this historic step.

An EU public prosecutor will help to better protect EU tax payer's money. Existing EU bodies such as the EU Anti-Fraud office, OLAF, cannot prosecute in the Member States but have to hand over their files to national bodies. This can make it more difficult to pursue cross border cases and to bring cases to a timely conclusion. The new EU public prosecutor will do exactly that – make sure that criminals are brought to justice and that misspent money is recovered much more quickly.

Criminals know no borders and it is high time to stop them and provide prosecutors with the missing tools to operate in a cross-border way.

We are pleased that 20 Member States have already expressed their wish to join forces and strengthen the protection of the EU budget and tax payer's money. We call on other Member States to join in soon.

As President **Juncker** said in his State of the Union speech, the new European Public Prosecutor can be a powerful tool to protect citizens even beyond its current competence for crimes against the EU's financial interests. The European Public Prosecutor's Office could also be tasked with prosecuting cross-border terrorist crimes. Next year, the Commission will lay out the next steps on a future extension of the tasks of the new European Public Prosecutor's Office.

For now, our immediate priority is to establish an independent, strong and effective European Public Prosecutor to fight crimes against the EU budget, and to get it up and running as soon as possible. Today's consent paves the way for the Council to adopt the Regulation next week.

## **Background**

Following the general approach reached in the June Justice Council among Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Slovenia, the European Parliament gave its consent today, so that the Regulation can finally be adopted in the Justice Council on 12 October. Other Member States may join the 20 founding

members at any time after the adoption of the Regulation.

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