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FOREWORD

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Over the past years, I cannot count how many times I have been asked to justify EPPÖ's existence by demonstrating that we cost less than what is eventually recovered for the EU budget based on our investigations.

Not that the EPPÖ would not be a 'profitable' investment, both for the European and national budgetary authorities. We are, there is no doubt about it. Just one example among many: we managed to seize **€257 million** in investigation **Moby Dick**, a massive VAT fraud run by an extremely dangerous criminal organisation. This corresponds to 46% of the damage under investigation in this case - an extraordinary achievement, both in absolute and relative terms. If we are successful in court, the responsible authorities will be able to confiscate these assets and monetise them in the public interest. By the way, taking into account the last two years, our **conviction rate** is close to **95%**.

However, I still believe that the European Union is ruled by law and not by cost-benefit analysis. Therefore, the EPPÖ's role is to **bring criminals to justice**, not to recover the damage they have caused. While our activity's financial impact widely outweighs our costs, the two most important objectives of our work remain the **effective dismantling of dangerous organised crime groups involved in EU fraud** and **upholding the trust of EU citizens in their justice system**.

By the end of 2025, we had **3 602 active cases**, for a **total estimated damage** over **€67.27 billion**. This is huge. Unfortunately, these numbers will continue to increase in the coming years.

What do they really mean?

First, that our prosecutors and staff are working simultaneously on thousands of cases. This indicator accounts for sufficiently documented suspicions of fraud, essentially committed between 2017 and today, in which a criminal investigation is ongoing, as well as ongoing prosecutions in front of the responsible courts. It is an impressive workload for an institution of our size.

Second, they mean that we have started to shift the attention of relevant partners onto organised crime groups defrauding EU revenue. With **981 ongoing VAT and customs fraud cases** worth **€45.01 billion of estimated damage**, both to the European and national budgets, together, we are making a dent into a criminal industry that has been ignored or tolerated for far too long. This is imperative for our security in the European Union, as well as for our public finances.

Third, these numbers mean that the first transnational prosecution office is making history. Our results are groundbreaking and, in many areas of prosecutorial work, already constitute benchmarks that will be very hard to match. We have achieved them with extremely hard work, outstanding dedication, and fierce determination.

At the end of my mandate, I am convinced that our citizens can be proud of these achievements. We did our best to show that in the European Union, justice serves its citizens, that it is tangible, and that the law must be equal for everyone. Let the EPPÖ team's unyielding commitment to independence be my legacy.