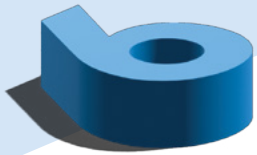




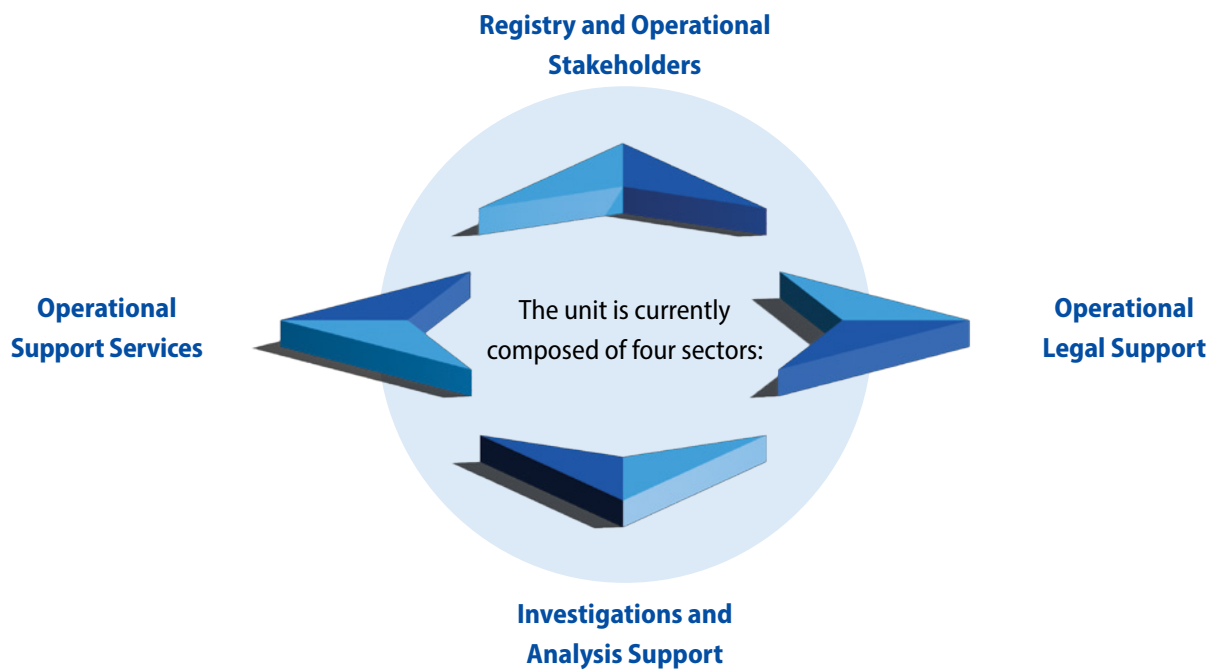
**OPERATIONS
AND
COLLEGE SUPPORT**



Operations and College Support

The Operations and College Support unit provides a range of legal, investigative and administrative services that sustain the EPPO's operational activity, leveraging on its specific position to provide distinct added value to investigations.

The unit's main areas of activity are: supporting the decision-making process of the Central Office in operational matters; processing information concerning potential offences falling under the competence of the EPPO; providing investigative expertise to ongoing cases; and developing support services for the operational activity. In 2023, the unit underwent a reorganisation process to align its structure with the overall strategic priorities of the EPPO, in order to ensure focus and a proper allocation of resources to the relevant areas of activity.





REGISTRY AND OPERATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Registry and Operational Stakeholders sector is responsible for processing all information reported to the EPPO pursuant to Article 24 of the EPPO Regulation, implementing the private party policy and coordinating, at operational level, the cooperation with the EPPO's partners, including the hit/no-hit mechanism.

In 2023, it processed **1 562 crime reports from national authorities** and **108 crime reports from institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the EU (IBOAs)**. Sources of the reports include all participating Member States and five IBOAs⁸².

The Central Office also processed **2 194 reports from private parties**, of which 1 770 were assessed as manifestly outside of the EPPO's competence. Approximately 300 further reports were submitted to the decentralised offices in the Member States, and were also assessed as manifestly outside of the EPPO's competence. The highest number of reports sent by private parties in participating Member States to the

Central Office originated from Croatia (433), Belgium (221), Germany (199), Bulgaria (179) and Romania (156), while 132 reports originated from non-participating Member States and 279 from non-EU countries⁸³.

The reporting of information by national authorities and EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies is done via a direct and secure connection – EPPOBox – managed by the EPPO, while private parties have access to a reporting tool on the EPPO website. The EPPO is also a user of the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), managed by Europol.

In 2023, a pilot project granting access to some of the EPPO's **digital tools** to the National European Delegated Prosecutors' Assistants (NEDPAs) was conducted, thus facilitating the exchange of information, and increasing the quality of the data available in the EPPO's Case Management System. This project was a success, with very encouraging preliminary results – so a decision was made to extend it, in 2024, to a greater number of NEDPAs.



OPERATIONAL LEGAL SUPPORT

The Operational Legal Support sector is responsible for providing operational legal support to the Central Office – namely the European Chief Prosecutor, the Permanent Chambers and the European Prosecutors.

This work includes case-related legal analysis and advice, the definition and implementation of operational procedures, monitoring the consistency of the internal practice, and facilitating the interactions within the Central Office, as well as with the European Delegated Prosecutors.

In 2023, this sector supported the Permanent Chambers in monitoring and directing **1 927 active investigations** and organised **481 meetings of the Permanent Chambers**. A dedicated team of national

legal system experts provided targeted support to the European Prosecutors, acted as **contact points** for the European Delegated Prosecutors and provided legal advice on matters relating to national law.

This sector also contributed to the **information exchange** with EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, to ensure that appropriate measures could be taken. In addition, this sector provided key legal and operational services, including the creation and running of an EPPO case law database, circulation of regular information about new developments in case law and legal literature, as well as the management of legal research databases.



INVESTIGATIONS AND ANALYSIS SUPPORT

The Investigations and Analysis Support sector provides expert investigative and analytical support to investigations, via case analysts and financial investigators operating as Case Support Officers, in a structure corresponding to the most prevalent types of fraud.

The establishment of dedicated specialised teams targeting the most prominent types of fraud (VAT fraud, customs fraud and expenditure fraud and corruption) has enabled this sector to significantly strengthen its capabilities and fine-tune its support, particularly regarding cases where significant added value may be achieved through the support activities performed at the Central Office level. Notably, these efforts contributed to further developing **innovative methodologies** for detecting links between

investigations conducted in different Member States, thereby helping to **coordinate** various operational actors involved, and ultimately, to investigate cases more effectively.

Additionally, this sector began documenting **best practices** for investigative approaches in relation to each relevant crime area, and identifying relevant patterns and trends.

Moreover, the sector has successfully recruited **new expertise**, facilitated expanded access to operational databases, operationalised new tools to support actions in situ, and overall broadened the scope of support for EPPO investigations. It has also started enabling or providing focused support in highly specialised fields, including forensic analysis.



OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Operational Support Services sector is responsible for identifying the operational needs of the EPPO, and participates in all projects aiming to develop the digital investigative tools and environments required to bolster the effectiveness of its investigations and prosecutions.

This sector also manages the linguistic services specific to the work of a supranational prosecutorial body, coordinates the organisation of operational meetings and manages inductions and training for operational staff. There were 25 operational meetings organised in 2023, as well as the workshops discussed in Section 5.



PROCESSING OF REPORTED INFORMATION

NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND IBOAS

In 2023, the EPPO processed **1 562 crime reports from national authorities** and **108 crime reports from IBOAs**. Sources of the reports include all 22 participating Member States and five IBOAs.

The reporting of information is done via **EPPOBox**, and SIENA, for secure communication with Europol.

The EPPO has continued to work closely with the national authorities of the Member States in the development of the reporting network and in the designation of the

competent authorities pursuant to Article 117 of the EPPO Regulation. By the end of 2023, the reporting network of the EPPO had expanded to **699 EPPOBox users** – which is 161 more than last year. This includes 16 of the designated authorities from the Member States connected directly with the Central Office in Luxembourg. Direct connection with key EPPO partners at EU level now exists with Europol, Eurojust, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, the European Investment Bank, the European Central Bank, Frontex and Eurofisc.

PRIVATE PARTIES AND LEGAL ENTITIES

The EPPO's central and decentralised levels received a total of **2 744 submissions from private parties and legal entities** in 2023. This represents an average of 52 per week.

Of these, **250 (9%)** were **repetitive reports and questions** from the public received by the Central Office, mainly on the status of investigations or proceedings, which were processed together with the corresponding European Prosecutor and the handling European Delegated Prosecutors.

Throughout the reporting period, the EPPO's Central Office received **132 reports** from **all five non-participating EU Member States** – Denmark (5), Hungary (58), Ireland (7), Poland (53), Sweden (9) – and **279 reports** from **non-EU countries**, including Armenia (7), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7), Russia (8),

Serbia (7), Switzerland (17), Türkiye (7), the UK (16), Ukraine (7) and the USA (132).

Of the 2 744 private party and legal entity submissions received, **424 (15%) related to the EPPO's competence**. Each of these reports was verified as a new registration case, or processed by the European Delegated Prosecutor under an existing EPPO registration or investigative case.

2 070 (75%) reports by private parties and legal entities were assessed as manifestly outside of the EPPO's competence. The EPPO **referred 380 (14%) reports** to the competent national authorities, when the reports did not relate to the EPPO's mandate but **might constitute a crime** under their competence. It **referred 58 (2.1%) reports** by private parties to OLAF for their processing.