



Paris, 5 March 2020

POLITICAL OPINION

Aimed at improving the fight against fraud involving European funding in the framework of the neighbourhood policies

The European affairs committee of the French Senate,

Having regard to Articles 310 and 325 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to the Commission Decision of 28 April 1999 establishing the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF),

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No. 1074/1999,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No. 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office,

Having regard to the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) of 14 June 2018, COM(2018) 460 final,

Having regard to Opinion No. 10/2018 of the European Court of Auditors on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood,

Development and International Cooperation Instrument, COM(2018) 460 final,

Having regard to the 19th report of the European Anti-Fraud Office, 1 January to 31 December 2018,

Having regard to its European Resolution No. 117 (2018-2019) of 21 June 2019 on judicial cooperation in criminal matters and the implementation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office,

Having regard to the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council presenting the 30th Annual Report on the protection of the financial interests of the European Union – fight against fraud – 2018 of 11 October 2019, COM(2019) 444 final,

Having regard to the European Court of Auditors' work programme for 2020,

Emphasises the importance of the fight against fraud and the protection of the financial interests of the European Union;

Supports the Commission and the European Anti-Fraud Office in their task of protecting the financial interests of the European Union; requests that the OLAF be given sufficient means to carry out its tasks;

Considers that the creation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, an independent body with the power to investigate, prosecute and bring to trial the perpetrators of and accomplices in criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the Union and therefore the European budget, should contribute significantly to the fight against fraud; insists that the European Public Prosecutor's Office be operational by the scheduled date of 20 November 2020; notes that French legislation is currently being amended to this end by way of Bill No. 283 (2019-2020) on the European Public Prosecutor's Office and specialised criminal justice, which it recently examined at first reading;

Considers that the fight against fraud and the protection of the European Union's financial interests require better control of the funding allocated to the European Neighbourhood Policy; considers that the transparency of this funding increases the

legitimacy of the European Neighbourhood Policy and helps to stabilise the beneficiary countries;

Strongly supports therefore the various initiatives taken or under way to strengthen the fight against fraud in third countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy;

Points out that several provisions of the multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027, in particular the Proposal for a Regulation establishing the NDICI, would improve the control of appropriations for the European Neighbourhood Policy; calls therefore for the swift conclusion of these negotiations;

Expresses hope that in future the European Court of Auditors' annual work programme will give greater emphasis to the control of appropriations for the European Neighbourhood Policy.