



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

Brussels, 15 January 2014

Statement by Commissioner Šemeta, following EP Plenary vote on Hercule III anti-fraud programme

"I warmly welcome the Parliament's endorsement of Hercule III programme, which will make €104.9 million available to support Member States in fighting fraud, corruption and other illegal activities. I would like to particularly thank the rapporteur, Mrs Macovei, for her valuable work on this file.

Hercule III is about better tackling illegal activities against the EU budget, by boosting Member States' capacities to fight fraud and corruption.

An important area under this programme will continue to be the fight against cigarette smuggling. Through the financing of X-ray scanners and sniffer dogs in harbours and airports, for example, it can greatly boost Member States' capacity to stamp out this costly and criminal activity.

Hercule III will also give valuable support through training activities. For example, it will facilitate the exchange of best practices through dedicated Transparency International seminars and promote ways to prevent corruption in procurement procedures. These activities are indispensable in improving Member States' fight against fraud and corruption, and will benefit all EU taxpayers."

Background:

Hercule III is a financial programme specifically dedicated to fighting fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities affecting the financial interests of the EU. It provides for the collective procurement of specialised equipment and databases to be used by national law enforcement agencies and training for anti-fraud specialists. The programme covers the period 2014-2020.

There are two major improvements in Hercule III compared to the previous programme:

Firstly, the support for grants is increased substantially. Hercule III now allows for grants to cover up to 80% of the costs of an action undertaken by a national or regional administration.

It allows potential beneficiaries to submit an application even in cases where there can be only a little national co-funding. This is particularly important in the current financial and economic crisis, where many national budgets are severely constrained.

Secondly, the reporting on the implementation of the Programme will be improved. The annual report to the European Parliament and to the Council will include an assessment of the achievement of the programme's objectives. In order to enhance the Programme's transparency, the Commission will clearly set out how the Programme contributes to protecting taxpayers' money.

For more on Hercule III, see: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-11-921 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-921_en.htm)