

Quicker freezing and confiscation of criminal assets in the EU

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Tighter deadlines for cross-border freezing and confiscation of assets
Compensating victims will take priority
Currently only 1% of estimated criminal profits in the EU end up being confiscated

New rules to speed up the freezing and confiscation of criminal assets

across the EU were adopted by the Civil Liberties committee on Tuesday.

This legislation, already informally agreed between Parliament and Council negotiators on 14 June, should make it quicker and simpler for EU member states to ask each other to freeze criminal assets or confiscate criminal property.

Parliament and Council negotiators agreed on:

introduction of deadlines: an EU country that receives a confiscation order from another EU country will have 45 days to execute the order; cross-border freezing orders have to be executed with the same speed and priority as national ones. Authorities will have four days to freeze the assets in the case of urgent freezing requests,

standard documents: standard certificates and forms will be used to ensure that EU countries act faster and communicate more efficiently,

wider scope: where requested, EU countries will be able to confiscate assets from other people connected to the criminal and they can also act in cases where there is no conviction (e.g. if the suspect has fled), and

victims' rights: victims will be the first in line to receive compensation when distributing confiscated assets.

Depriving criminals of their assets is an important tool for fighting organised crime and terrorism. However, currently only an estimated 1.1% of criminal profits are confiscated in the EU.

Quote

Rapporteur Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE, FR) said: "I'm glad that this regulation has been adopted; it is the product of constructive work between the EU institutions. The Parliament made sure that the new instrument is faster, more efficient, more operational and also fairer for the victims, for all those affected and based on the respect for fundamental rights."

Next steps

Civil Liberties MEPs adopted the new rules by 43 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention.

The agreed text now needs to be formally approved by the Parliament as a whole and the Council before entering into force. The new rules will apply 24 months after their entry into force.

Background

According to a [Europol study from 2016](#), 98.9% of estimated criminal profits in the EU are not confiscated and remain at the disposal of criminals. Between, 2010 and 2014, 2.2% of estimated criminal profits were provisionally seized or frozen but only 1.1% were finally confiscated at EU level.