



The Vienna Christmas Academy For EU Funds Professionals - Integrity · Transparency · AI & Intelligent Systems for Risk Management · Management & Control · Audit · Anti-Fraud & Compliance Discover Innovation · Strengthen Compliance · Protect European Investments ESI Funds · IPA · AMIF · ISF · BMVI · CAP & Agricultural Funds (EAGF & EAFRD) · and Other EU Funds

DAY 1 — THE INTEGRITY MISSION

When Professional Judgement Is Tested

Central theme: Professional integrity, ethical judgement, professional behaviour, confidentiality and the responsibilities of EU Funds professionals.

09:00–09:30 — Opening: “The Snow Is Falling, But the Risks Are Rising”

Participants enter the fictional **Christmas EU Funds Control Room** and receive their mission briefing.

Several EU-funded programmes are approaching year-end closure. Claims must be verified, payments authorised and sensitive integrity signals assessed.

Learning focus:

- Understanding the workshop mission
- Integrity, fraud prevention, risk analysis and internal controls
- The role of professional judgement in EU Funds Management, Control and Audit
- Creating a competitive but safe learning environment

09:30–10:30 — Mission 1: The Integrity Compass

Financial, Personal and Organisational Integrity Under Pressure

Teams analyse professional dilemmas involving:

- Management pressure
- Unclear rules
- Personal relationships

- Gifts and hospitality
- Sensitive information
- Time pressure
- Political or organisational expectations

10:30–10:45 — Coffee Break

10:45–12:00 — Mission 2: The Dilemma Arena

Professional Behaviour, Carefulness and Confidentiality

Teams face complex cases where several answers appear reasonable, but only one represents the strongest professional response.

Focus on:

- Professional scepticism
- Confidentiality
- Independence
- Accountability
- Responsible decision-making

12:00–13:00 — Lunch Break

13:00–14:15 — Mission 3: The Control Room Test

Teams receive a fictional EU-funded project file that appears complete but contains:

- Missing evidence
- Weak documentation
- Contradictory explanations
- Control weaknesses
- Potential integrity concerns

Teams must identify what requires further verification.

14:15–14:30 — Coffee Break

14:30–15:30 — Mission 4: The Ethics Hotline

Handling Signals, Rumours and Whistleblower Information

A fictional integrity signal arrives through the **Christmas Ethics Hotline**.

Teams assess:

- What information can be trusted
- What requires verification
- How the signal should be documented
- When escalation is required
- How confidentiality should be protected

15:30–16:30 — Mission 5: The Integrity Snowstorm

High-Pressure Final Round

Several events happen simultaneously. Teams must prioritise risks, make decisions and defend their professional judgement.

16:30–18:30 — Vienna Cultural & Networking Experience

Vienna Walking Tour & Festive Food Tasting

- Vienna Old Town
 - St. Stephen's Cathedral
 - Graben and Kohlmarkt
 - Hofburg area
 - Christmas market atmosphere
 - Traditional Viennese food tasting
 - Informal networking and team bonding
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DAY 2 — THE ANTI-FRAUD & ANTI-CORRUPTION MISSION

Protecting EU Funds Before the Snow Covers the Tracks

Central theme: Fraud awareness, anti-corruption, conflict of interest, double funding, red flags and prevention.

09:00–09:20 — Opening Challenge

“Yesterday, you protected your professional judgement. Today, you protect the funds.”

09:20–10:30 — Mission 6: Red Flags in the Christmas Tree

Teams build their own **Red Flag Christmas Tree**.

They identify and classify indicators related to:

- Fraud
- Corruption
- Collusion
- Falsified documents
- Procurement irregularities
- Manipulation of costs
- Unusual beneficiary behaviour

10:30–10:45 — Coffee Break

10:45–12:00 — Mission 7: Anti-Fraud Christmas Decorations

Teams create practical **Anti-Fraud Decorations** based on their own professional environment.

Focus on:

- Preventive controls
- Detective controls
- Risk-based verification
- Fraud risk management
- Reporting and escalation

12:00–13:00 — Lunch Break

13:00–14:00 — Mission 8: Anti-Fraud Skills Lab

Real Fraud Cases Under the Christmas Tree

Teams work through realistic fraud scenarios and identify:

- Red flags
- Weak controls
- Fraud patterns
- Evidence requirements
- Appropriate follow-up actions

14:00–14:15 — Coffee Break

14:15–15:15 — Mission 9: The COI Christmas Court

Conflict of Interest: Appearance, Risk or Reality?

Teams act as professional panels assessing different conflict-of-interest scenarios.

They must determine:

- Whether a conflict exists
- Whether there is an appearance of conflict
- What evidence is required
- What preventive measures should be taken
- When escalation is appropriate

15:15–16:00 — Mission 10: The Influence Map

Anti-Corruption Essentials

Teams analyse networks of people and organisations connected to a funded project.

Potential issues include:

- Gifts
- Pressure
- Favouritism
- Collusion
- Hidden interests

- Undisclosed relationships
- Beneficial ownership concerns

16:00–16:45 — Mission 11: Double Funding Detective

One Cost, Two Claims, Many Explanations

Teams investigate a suspected double-funding case involving different EU and national funding programmes.

They must:

- Identify duplicated costs
- Compare supporting evidence
- Trace funding sources
- Challenge explanations
- Establish an evidence trail
- Recommend appropriate action

16:45–17:00 — Day 2 Challenge Review

Integrity → Fraud → Corruption → COI → Double Funding

DAY 3 — THE INTELLIGENCE LAB

From Traditional Control Thinking to Intelligence-Driven EU Funds Management

Central theme: Using intelligence, technology and structured information gathering to strengthen control, verification and audit.

09:00–09:30 — Opening of the Christmas Intelligence Lab

Mission: Why EU Funds control needs sharper intelligence, stronger evidence and smarter judgement.

09:30–10:30 — The Changing Risk Landscape

Application across:

- ESI Funds
- IPA
- AMIF
- ISF
- BMVI
- CAP & Agricultural Funds (EAGF & EAFRD)

Trust is good. Evidence is better. Intelligence makes the difference.

10:30–10:45 — Coffee Break

10:45–12:00 — Core Concepts of Hybrid Co-Intelligence

Introduction to:

- **Human Intelligence (HUMINT)**
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
- **Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)**
- Hybrid Co-Intelligence
- Combining human judgement with technological tools
- Strengths and limitations of different intelligence approaches

12:00–13:00 — Lunch Break

13:00–15:00 — Real-Life Intelligence Cases

Participants work through practical cases and determine:

- What information is already available?
- What information is missing?
- Which intelligence technique should be used?
- What can be verified through open sources?
- What requires human interaction?
- Where can AI support the analysis?
- How can intelligence be converted into reliable evidence?

Hands-on work — participants are encouraged to bring their laptops.

15:00–15:15 — Coffee Break

15:15–17:00 — Applied Intelligence Workshop

Teams conduct mini-investigations involving:

- Risk indicators
- Beneficiary profiles
- Relationships and networks
- Public information
- Contradictory statements
- Suspicious patterns
- Evidence development

Teams prepare their intelligence approach for Day 4.

DAY 4 — THE INVESTIGATION & EVIDENCE MISSION

Following the Evidence

Central theme: Applying intelligence tools to complex integrity, fraud and EU Funds cases.

09:00–10:30 — Hybrid Co-Intelligence for EU Funds

Advanced practical application of:

- HUMINT
- AI
- OSINT
- Evidence analysis
- Risk-based investigation
- Intelligence-led audit and verification

Teams explore the full chain:

Red Flag → Intelligence → Verification → Evidence → Finding → Action

10:30–10:45 — Coffee Break

10:45–12:00 — Case Lab: Evidence-Based Reasoning

Teams distinguish between:

- Facts
- Assumptions
- Allegations
- Intelligence
- Evidence
- Conclusions

Focus on avoiding premature conclusions and strengthening professional scepticism.

12:00–13:00 — Lunch Break

13:00–15:00 — CASE MISSION 1: The Integrity & Intimidation Case

A life-like EU Funds case unfolds.

Teams must:

- Identify the initial red flags
- Assess integrity risks
- Identify potential fraud and corruption indicators
- Analyse conflicts of interest
- Consider alternative verification approaches
- Use intelligence tools
- Develop an evidence trail
- Decide when and how to escalate

15:00–15:15 — Coffee Break

15:15–16:30 — CASE MISSION 1: Investigation Continues

The case develops with new information.

Teams must adapt their strategy and distinguish between:

Signal → Suspicion → Intelligence → Verification → Evidence → Finding

16:30–17:00 — Intelligence Debrief

Teams compare:

- Investigation approaches
- Evidence strategies
- Intelligence sources
- Risk assessments
- Professional judgements

17:00–18:30 — SURPRISE MISSION

A Surprise Visit to an EU-Funded Project in Vienna

One of the special features of **Day 4** is an unexpected field mission: a **surprise visit to an EU-funded project in Vienna**.

Participants leave the classroom and enter a real project environment, where they are challenged to observe the project from an **intelligence, integrity, verification and audit perspective**.

Without relying solely on prepared information, participants are encouraged to:

- Observe carefully
- Ask intelligent and relevant questions
- Identify potential red flags
- Consider what information requires verification
- Think about what evidence they would seek
- Assess controls and implementation realities
- Apply a Human Intelligence mindset
- Connect observations with the concepts developed during the workshop

The visit transforms the learning environment from **classroom theory into real-world professional observation**.

The Day 4 Challenge

What do you see when you stop looking only at the documents?

Participants return with observations and intelligence that will feed into the final mission on Day 5.

DAY 5 — THE VIENNA MISSION

Integrated Investigation, Intelligence & EU Funds Protection

Central theme: Bringing together everything learned during the previous four days in one comprehensive simulation.

09:00–10:30 — CASE MISSION 2: The Christmas Kick-Off Mystery

EU Funds, Rural Sports and the Old Boys' Network

Teams receive a complex fictional case involving:

- EU-funded activities
- Beneficiary relationships
- Procurement concerns
- Potential conflicts of interest
- Suspicious expenditure
- Possible double funding
- Integrity concerns
- Potential corruption indicators

Teams must use **Hybrid Co-Intelligence, AI, OSINT and professional judgement.**

10:30–10:45 — Coffee Break

10:45–12:00 — Investigation & Intelligence Challenge

Teams complete their investigation and prepare a professional case file covering:

1. Risk identification
2. Red-flag analysis
3. Intelligence sources
4. Verification strategy
5. Evidence trail
6. Conflict-of-interest assessment
7. Fraud and corruption considerations
8. Double-funding assessment
9. Findings and conclusions
10. Recommended actions

12:00–13:00 — Lunch Break

13:00–15:00 — FINAL TEAM PRESENTATION CHALLENGE

Each team presents:

- Mission outcomes
- Key risks identified
- Evidence trail
- Intelligence methods used
- AI / OSINT / HUMINT approach
- Control weaknesses
- Fraud and corruption indicators
- COI assessment

- Double-funding findings
- Recommended actions
- Lessons learned

15:00–15:15 — Coffee Break

15:15–16:15 — Professional Jury & Challenge Round

Teams challenge each other's findings.

The jury assesses:

- Professional judgement
- Quality of evidence
- Intelligence methodology
- Risk assessment
- Integrity and independence
- Practicality of recommendations
- Ability to defend conclusions

16:15–16:45 — THE CHRISTMAS INTEGRITY & INTELLIGENCE AWARDS

The winning team receives the symbolic title:

THE VIENNA INTEGRITY GUARDIANS

Masters of Intelligence, Evidence & EU Funds Protection

Additional awards may include:

Best Intelligence Strategy

Best Evidence Trail

Best Fraud Detection

Best Professional Judgement

Best Team Investigation

16:45–17:00 — Closing Session

Use intelligence wisely. Challenge every story. Follow the evidence. Protect the funds.

Participants reflect on the key lessons from the five-day programme and identify how the techniques can be transferred into their own professional environment.

THE 5-DAY LEARNING JOURNEY

Day	Main Theme	Core Competence
Day 1	The Integrity Mission	Judgement, ethics, behaviour & confidentiality
Day 2	Anti-Fraud & Anti-Corruption	Red flags, COI, corruption & double funding
Day 3	The Intelligence Lab	HUMINT, AI, OSINT & Hybrid Co-Intelligence

Day 4 Investigation & Evidence	Intelligence-led verification, investigation & evidence
Day 5 The Vienna Mission	Integrated intelligence, evidence & EU Funds protection

Overall Workshop Outcome

By the end of the five-day programme, participants will have strengthened their ability to:

- Apply professional integrity and ethical judgement
- Recognise and assess fraud and corruption risks
- Identify and manage conflicts of interest
- Detect potential double funding
- Strengthen anti-fraud and anti-corruption controls
- Apply professional scepticism and evidence-based reasoning
- Use HUMINT, AI and OSINT appropriately
- Develop intelligence-led verification and audit approaches
- Build stronger evidence trails
- Analyse complex EU Funds cases
- Defend professional findings and recommendations
- Connect intelligence, controls, evidence and professional judgement

Final Workshop Philosophy

Integrity protects the judgement.

Controls protect the process.

Intelligence reveals the risk.

Evidence supports the finding.

Professional courage protects the funds.

